LOS ANGELES WESTERNERS CORRAL
The Branding Iron

FALL 2018 | LOS ANGELES CORRAL | NUMBER 292

Figure 1: *The San Francisco Call building (with cupola, at center) on fire, Market Street, April, 1906. San Francisco Fire Department steam-pumping engine at left, Regular Army Cavalry trooper mounted at center, National Guardsmen with fixed bayonets at right. Photo courtesy of Brian D. Dillon.*

Tremorous Tales From the Los Angeles Westerners

Edited by John Dillon

We of the Los Angeles Corral of The Westerners—in our humble and totally unbiased opinion—consider ourselves lucky to live in the No. 1 state of the Union, California. It is home to fine weather, beautiful scenery, and it is a melting pot of cultures (and *cuisine!*). However, if there is a downside to life in the Golden State, it would be our not-infrequent earthquakes. Most are minor tremors. The ones that are not create unforgettable memories for all Californians. They are especially so for the ten Westerners who have contributed the following accounts, both personal and familial, of close encounters with Mother Earth's anger.

(*Continued on Page 3*)

The Branding Iron

Los Angeles Corral of The Westerners

Published Quarterly

Winter - Spring – Summer – Fall

For subscription information: Los Angeles Corral of The Westerners, P. O. Box 1891, San Gabriel, CA 91778
www.lawesterners.org

The Branding Iron is always seeking articles of up to around 20 pages dealing with every phase of the history of the Old West and California. Contributions from both members and friends are always welcome.

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See our web site for all the Branding Irons, photos, Corral meetings and so much more!

Editor's Corner . . .

The Branding Iron celebrates the end of 2018 with a collection of experiences that all California Westerners have shared—earthquakes! For this special Fall issue, L.A. Corral members Joseph Cavallo, Paul Clark, Brian D. Dillon, Abe Hoffman, Amy and Jim Macklin, Jim McHargue, Therese Melbar, Paul Rippens, and Terry Terrel recount their personal and familial stories about tremors in California and abroad.

If you were unable to attend any Corral meetings (due to earthquakes or otherwise), catch up by checking the announcements in the Corral Chips section, and the monthly Roundup summaries by Corral Fellows Dennis Bermudez, Patrick Mulvey, and yours truly. Brian D. Dillon and Abe Hoffman close this issue with a pair of book reviews.

Hats off to everyone who has helped *The Branding Iron* be a journal we can all enjoy. If you would like to contribute an article or book review, please feel free to contact me with your ideas.

Happy Trails!

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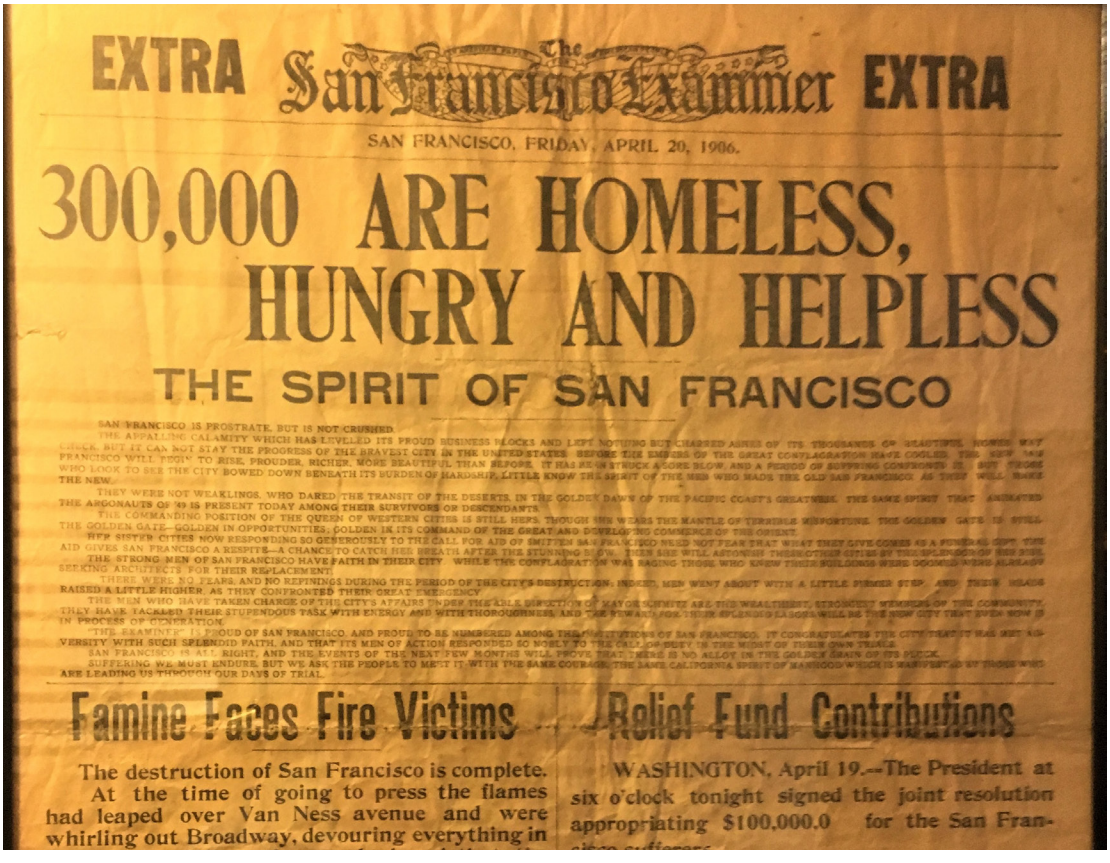


EXTRA The San Francisco Examiner EXTRA

SAN FRANCISCO, FRIDAY, APRIL 20, 1906.

300,000 ARE HOMELESS, HUNGRY AND HELPLESS

THE SPIRIT OF SAN FRANCISCO

SAN FRANCISCO IS PROSTRATE, BUT IS NOT CRUSHED.

Famine Faces Fire Victims

The destruction of San Francisco is complete. At the time of going to press the flames had leaped over Van Ness avenue and were whirling out Broadway, devouring everything in

Relief Fund Contributions

WASHINGTON, April 19.—The President at six o'clock tonight signed the joint resolution appropriating $100,000.0 for the San Fran-

Figure 2: *This San Francisco Examiner newspaper, printed just two days after the San Francisco earthquake on April 18, 1906, was saved by Amy Macklin's grandparents, who were there and survived that catastrophe. It now hangs in the hallway of the Macklin's home along with other newspapers detailing important historical events collected by her California family members over five generations. This front page reflects the conflicting feelings San Franciscans had about the event. One article bravely proclaimed, "San Francisco is prostrate, but is not crushed." Another article begins more realistically, stating, "The destruction of San Francisco is complete." It continues in this tone with the words, "At the time of going to press the flames had leaped over Van Ness avenue and were whirling out Broadway, devouring everything in their path. When the people heard that the efforts to stop the fire at Van Ness avenue failed they lost heart." Thankfully, this thinking did not persist. Within ten years, a rebuilt San Francisco was hosting the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition. — Jim Macklin*

1906 San Francisco Earthquake

Amy Macklin

I am a native San Franciscan, as were my parents and my grandparents, all four of whom were living in "The City" on April 18, 1906. None of them were married to each other yet at the time of the big tremor.

My grandmother on my mother's side used to regale me with stories of living in a tent in Golden Gate Park for months until suitable housing could be found. She was a young girl and found it all very adventuresome. She slept in a bathtub for the duration. How the bathtub made it to the park, I will never know. One of her brothers was never found, assumed to be a casualty. My father quietly claimed that he undoubtedly hightailed in out of town to escape his debts. Another mystery remains.

On my father's side came the story about his father. The day after the quake, my grandfather, as well as most San Franciscans, was out surveying the damage and fire from atop Van Ness Avenue looking toward down-

town. He ran into one of his young acquaintances who said, "Charlie, do you have a nickel to loan me for some coffee?" Grandpa was happy to help his pal. It turned out that the friend was A.P. Giannini, who went on after his cup of coffee to found the Bank of America. My grandfather never got his nickel back. How much would that debt be worth today, with interest?

Anyone visiting our home has seen our collection of old San Francisco newspapers hanging in our back hallway. My favorite is a copy of the first paper issued after the earthquake with the headline, "300,000 are homeless, hungry and helpless." San Francisco had recovered before and with its indomitable spirit would rise again.

1906 San Francisco Earthquake
1933 Long Beach Earthquake
1952 Kern County Earthquake
1971 San Fernando Earthquake

Jim McHargue

My grandmother's most pungent memory of earthquakes was the 7.9 magnitude 1906 San Francisco Earthquake that struck at 5:12 a.m. on Wednesday, April 18, 1906. While she was in Boyle Heights, her fiancé, Fred H. Brown was taking an extension class at Stanford in photography. The quake threw him out of bed and deposited him in the center of the room. His fellow photography student and friend was tossed from the opposite side of the room and they clunked heads. Gathering their wits about them they dressed, grabbed their cameras and equipment, and made their way to the city by boat. They spent the next several days photographing the ruins and, to a lesser extent, the fire. One photo that remains was shot from roof top showing fire crazed horses charging out of a city stable and down the street. Fred Brown was to become a commercial photographer in Los Angeles and later a government photographer with the Department of Agriculture in D.C. during his very short life.

For both of my parents, the "big one" was the 6.4 magnitude Long Beach earthquake which hit at 5:54 p.m. on March 10, 1933. My father had a St. Helen's gas station on Whittier Boulevard on the Eastside. He said the shaking was so intense and lasted for so long that he could no longer keep on his feet. He said he sat down splay legged in the middle of the station's gravel apron and watched the phone poles flex back and forth. My mother was still living at home. Her father who had just arrived home hustled the entire family and the cook out into the front yard of his Arlington Heights house. The most notable memory from that day was from that of my mother's maternal grandfather who had just left a drug store in downtown Long Beach. He was crossing the street as the brick building he had been in collapsed killing everyone inside.

I experienced my first earthquake just over a month before my fifth birthday. The 7.3 magnitude Kern County "Tehachapi" earthquake hit on July 21, 1952 at 4:52 a.m. Because I slept soundly through it, my memories are, unfortunately, after the fact. I was told my older brothers were both awakened by the quake and that my juvenile-sized bed on castors was moving all over the room. My parents came in to find both of my older brothers who had eventually corralled it by shoving it up against a wall and keeping it there by wedging their bodies against it. My father said I was sleeping like the dead. This was all news to me later that same morning.

We lived many miles away in Encino at the time and I recall feeling left out by sleeping through it. A day or so later I was playing with the boy who lived in the house behind us. He showed me their dining room which had been roped off. The oak flooring had opened up and sagged following the quake. Evidently a post had slipped off its cement pier that happened to be directly under the heavy formal dining room table. The houses were all circa 1940-1950 modern construction and as I recall their home was the only one with some damage worth talking about.

Figure 3: *Dead cattle on Mission Street, San Francisco, April, 1906. This was part of the herd that stampeded down Mission Street, goring and killing a bartender, as witnessed by the grandmother of another Westerner, Brian D. Dillon. Photo courtesy of the same.*

Years later at 6 a.m. February 9, 1971, I was living with my first wife in an apartment in Sherman Oaks when the 6.5 magnitude San Fernando "Sylmar" quake occurred. I'd been home from Vietnam and out of the army for less than two years. I recall I woke up and heard a distant rumbling sound and proceeded to go back to sleep telling myself, "Good, the B-52's are out tonight." Meaning if they were bombing, we would not be mortared that night. A moment later I said out loud, "There are no B-52 raids in Los Angeles!" as it violently hit. My young wife at that time woke and went absolutely nuts with fear. I pulled her toward me seeking refuge in a door frame. Something we learned three of four decades later not to do. We came out fine. Only about two inches of water sloshed out of the aquarium and some books slipped off the shelves.

My father was living alone at the time in Encino, a short drive up Ventura Boulevard. My wife and I quickly dressed and got the car going. Driving up I noticed the plate glass windows of a camera shop were broken out and several nice Nikon SLR cameras were laying on the sidewalk. No, we didn't stop. When I got to my father we found he was fine and while the electricity was out the gas was on and he was heating water for coffee. It turned out when the quake hit he was shaving with a straight razor. When the shaking stopped he finished his shave with the barber's razor in one hand and a flashlight on the sink. We left after a couple of hours retracing our drive back down Ventura Boulevard. When we passed the camera store again no one was in sight. Nor were the cameras we'd seen on the sidewalk.

1971 San Fernando Earthquake

Joseph Cavallo

On February 9, 1971 at 6:01 am a 6.6 magnitude earthquake struck in Sylmar, California. I had just turned 22 and I had never experienced an earthquake before. Today, I remember the event like it was yesterday. I was a young man just finishing my undergraduate degree at UCLA and still lived with my parents in Westchester, a part of Los Angeles right next to the Los Angeles airport later called LAX, approximately 30 miles south of the epicenter.

I was at home that early morning, and had been praying literally on my knees to God when the quake started. I really was. I have always been a religious person. For me, the quake created a long rolling back-and-forth motion which felt like I was in a boat. It seemed to last a long time, but it was only one minute. I stayed on my knees. I didn't feel afraid and thought at the time how nice it was to be praying. It has always seemed like a safe haven for me in the time of that crisis. Later, I did feel great sadness and to this day still feel pain for those who died in the hospital and freeway collapse in the Sylmar area. Often I recall and relive those moments. That freeway collapse was a major loss and took years to rebuild.

The experience for me was life-changing in terms of awareness and what might happen at the next quake. I realized the importance of "epicenter perspective" in determining one's mental outlook. It has made a difference in how I handle the stress of earthquakes since. For example, a friend who was directly on the epicenter during the 1994 Northridge quake told me he thought the world was coming to an end and was so stressed out because he believed at the time that the epicenter was in downtown Los Angeles. He thought if it was so bad in Northridge, that all of downtown Los Angeles must have collapsed. In contrast, my approach going forward is to imagine that I am at the epicenter of the next quake, and thereby not let my mind wander to apocalyptic visions of what might be happening elsewhere. Maybe also I'll be praying.

1971 San Fernando Earthquake
1994 Northridge Earthquake

Paul H. Rippens

The earthquake problem in Southern California is something that has always been around and will remain a constant concern for residents of the area. During a recent project on the Missions of California, I discovered that almost every one of the twenty-one missions suffered damage as a result of earthquakes, especially the ones that existed in the early 1800s.

After reading Abraham Hoffman's book, *California's Deadliest Earthquakes*, I sent him a letter thanking him for writing the book and telling him of my recollections of earthquakes I experienced while growing up in Southern California and while working for the County of Los Angeles Fire Department. The following is my recollections of those events.

My first recollection of an earthquake came early in the morning of July 21, 1952. My family was living in Temple City at the time and my brother and I shared a bedroom attached to the garage. When the shaking started I remember sitting up in bed and looking out the window only to see power wires arcing. Although the Magnitude 7.3 earthquake was centered over a hundred miles from our home, I still remember the shaking. Of course we got to watch some of the coverage on television later, probably with Bill Welsh and Stan Chambers on KTLA.

During the 1971 San Fernando/Sylmar Earthquake, I was living in La Verne and the quake felt quite strong, but I did not realize how bad it was until several hours later. I went to work and spent most of the day in San Gabriel Canyon where we had a reforestation project going. It was not until the afternoon when I spoke to our office in Los Angeles that I realized the amount of destruction that had been done (we did not have radios in our vehicles at that time). I was directed to go to the Veterans Hospital in the San Fernando Valley and help out in any way I could.

There was a lot of activity at the old hospital as a couple of the buildings had col-

Figures 4 & 5: *Photographs of the Olive View Hospital in Sylmar, California following the San Fernando/Sylmar Earthquake of February 9, 1971. The $25 million hospital had been completed only a year earlier in 1970 and was a total loss. Photographs by Paul Rippens.*

lapsed trapping people inside. I spent the night on top of one of the buildings trying to find people known to be inside, but probably not alive. Early in the morning, I think about 4:00 a.m., the crane operator we were using swung the load of debris that we were removing from the building right over our heads and the foreman of the inmate crew was very upset with me since it was my job to direct the operator. He was probably right and it was at that time that I left the site, got some breakfast from the mobile kitchen set up to feed the workers, got a couple of hours sleep in my truck and left the area. The site of the old vet's hospital is now a park.

The earthquake damaged the new Olive View Hospital and, since the structure was damaged beyond repair, we were allowed to remove the irrigation system installed for the expansive lawn around the hospital to use at our Fire Department Heliport in Pacoima. Our Fire Station at Olive View received a large amount of damage and the movement of the ground moved the fire engine against the wall of the building. The station personnel had a difficult time getting the engine out of the building which was a total loss.

The 1994 Northridge Earthquake was definitely one to remember. I was Chief of the department's Forestry Division at the time. After the shaking stopped at our home in La Verne, I dressed and headed for the Fire Department Headquarters in East Los Angeles. Upon arriving I first checked out our office and found it to be in pretty good shape. File cabinet drawers were open but everything else was okay. I then proceeded to the Fire Chief's office since I had been told that it received a lot of damage. That part of the building had been added on some time after the construction of the main building (1954) and it was a real mess. Ceiling tiles and light fixtures were down, furniture overturned and books strewn about, just a big mess.

I then proceeded to our Command and Control Building and assumed the position of Logistic Chief for the incident. We were trying to cover so many incidents and at the same time assist the Los Angeles Fire Department, which was stretched thin dealing with collapsed buildings, broken water mains, and fires everywhere. One of my Assistant Chiefs, Herb Spitzer, lived in Acton and had made contact with the Incident Commander in the Santa Clarita Valley and took over as Logistic Chief for that Command Post. He kept requesting additional resources for the multiple incidents they had going on, including breaks in the Los Angeles Aqueduct, however we could not get any additional crews or engines to

Figure 6: *Damage to Interstate 5 in the Weldon Canyon area following the magnitude 6.7 Northridge Earthquake of January 17, 1994. Photo from social media.*

them because of the damage to the freeway system. Eventually they were able to get the old road open and we could fill his requests, but until that happened, all crews and equipment had to come from the Antelope Valley.

I guess Southern California will eventually experience the Big One, and it will be a mess. I attended a conference of the Southern California Association of Foresters and Fire Wardens a few years ago, and Lucile Jones from Caltech was one of the speakers. She laid out what could possibly happen if an 8.0 earthquake were to strike Southern California, and it was scary. Now living in Arizona, I guess I'll see if I will have *ocean-front property!*

1971 San Fernando Earthquake

Therese Melbar

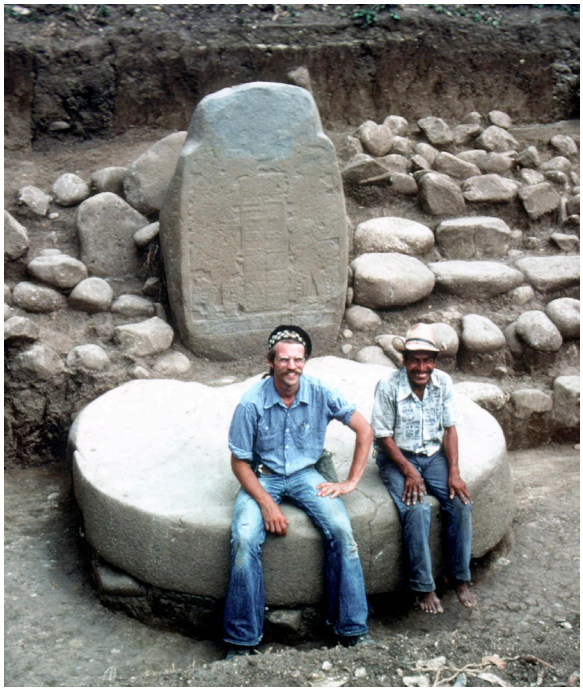
The first earthquake I can remember was the 1971 San Fernando Earthquake. The quake occurred at 6:01 a.m. on Tuesday, February 9, 1971. Before this, I don't recall knowing that earthquakes existed.

My sisters and I all shared the same room. The upper bunk was my bed, and my twin sister had the lower. Our older sister had a bed against the opposite wall. The earthquake woke us up.

Mother came to check on us and explained that the shaking was from an earthquake. This made the event a big deal to me and memorable. It's a moment in my childhood that I still see in my mind—a time when our mom still seemed to care about us, before she ended up with too many children and a life that she had not wanted. Generally, she paid us little attention.

This day was different. Although I do not recall knowing about any damage from the quake in our suburban neighborhood, everyone was talking about the earthquake at school. A few slept through it. One girl said the shaking made her bed move across the floor. There was excitement for all of us children as we shared our experiences. In my mind, I kept thinking about my mother, asking us if we were okay.

I have spent over 45 years pondering the earthquake and her uncharacteristic reaction to it. What did it mean? It's a question that was never asked or answered.



In California earthquakes are followed by fires, but in Guatemala when the Earthquake God speaks, Volcano Gods answer. ***Figure 7 (Left)*** *Santiaguito, the active vent on the lower slope of Santa María Volcano, puffs out a mushroom cloud of volcanic ash just after the catastrophic Guatemala earthquake of February 4th 1976. Dillon photo, taken from the Panamerican Highway (foreground). I was a member of the University of California, Berkeley, archaeological expedition to the Pacific Slope of Guatemala when the 1976 Earthquake hit.* ***Figure 8 (Right)*** *Stela 5, the oldest dated Maya monument, and Altar 8 at Takalik Abaj, just after I discovered and excavated them in February, 1976. Dillon at left, Miguel Simaj, a local Mam Maya friend, at right. Ed Torres photo.*

Encounters With the Lord of the Underworld

Brian Dervin Dillon

1976 Guatemala Earthquake

Compared to most Central American earthquakes, our home-grown California variants are small hiccups. My grandfather, a Sergeant in the Coast Artillery, led one of the dynamite squads that blew up San Francisco in April 1906, trying to stop the post-earthquake fires that consumed so much of the city. Simultaneously, my grandmother drove her one-horse rig up to the top of Wolfback Ridge above her home town of Sausalito, wrapped herself in blankets and then, for three days and nights, watched San Francisco burn. The flames were just over a mile away across the Golden Gate. Grandma heard the distant booms of dynamite detonations echoing across the water. The man setting them off, unbeknownst to her, would become her husband four years later.[1]

Eighty-eight years later, I shepherded my wife and two young kids out past the broken glass and jammed doors of my house during the 1994 Northridge Earthquake. I put them inside my truck in the driveway, then turned off the main water valve since our water heater had somersaulted and water was gushing from its broken pipes. I looked over the roof of my house, and wondered why the sun was rising in the *north* that morning. I realized that, just after turning off water that could be used for fire-fighting, it wasn't the sunrise I saw, but the glow of fires fed by broken gas mains, heading my way.

So, my family has been there, done that. If California earthquakes spark fires, in Guatemala they trigger volcanic eruptions (Figure 7). All Americans have heard of the Maya wind god, *Huracán*, whose name we give an English inflection to ("Hurricane") and pair with boy's and girl's names in alphabetical order each year. But few *gringos* know that the Maya Earthquake God *Kisin* is also the *God of Death* and the *Lord of the Underworld*. The ancient Maya believed that earthquakes were how the Lord of the Underworld called his subjects home.

In January, 1976, I led a small party of archaeology students from the University of California, Berkeley, down to the site of Takalik Abaj, Guatemala. We hauled field gear with us (alidade, plane table, stadia rod, various tripods, etc.) and went down on the bus. I had already written an informal guide to travel and survival in Central America, having been down by bus, train, and hitchhiking three times before. My *Gringo's Guide to Guatemala* was given by the Berkeley Department of Anthropology to those heading south for the first time.

Within my 1976 group two other students were old hands, having traveled with me as my undergraduate crew the year before, by bus, military plane, and dugout canoe, but the others were "newbies" never having been in Latin America before. We paused in Mexico City after the second, very long, 48-hour-leg of our 3,000 mile international bus ride. We stayed with an old friend of mine in Villa Coapa, the former 1968 Olympic Village. Then back onto a third bus for the next 24-hour leg from D.F. down to the Guatemalan Border, where we hauled our gear to and through two more customs inspections. Then onto our fourth and final bus, to chug along the Panamerican Highway eastwards to the town of Retalhuleu, whose shy and retiring residents erected a cement sign proclaiming it *Capital Del Mundo:* Capital of the World. Again, no big deal: over a 40+ year career in Maya archaeology I have taken the bus to and from Central America 14 times, driven my pickup truck down and back 8 times, taken the train once, hitch-hiked once, and even flown down and back on real airplanes, just like the tourists do.

Before we boarded the first bus for the initial 400-mile trip down to the U.S./Mexican Border we settled upon a rendezvous location and time. Long before cell phones, the Internet, and Email, when traveling to foreign countries to do archaeology you must show up at a specific place on a specific day at a specific hour. How do you make certain you arrive on time? Simple: just come a day early. So we students, with our ton of gear, agreed to meet our two U.C. Berkeley archaeology professors, who would run the dig, at high noon in a cantina just off the main drag in Retalhuleu. And, since I was in charge of the student contingent, and being a former Boy Scout, we did indeed arrive on time.

That same day up the volcano we went, and within my first week on the archaeological site, I not only discovered the oldest dated hieroglyphic monument anywhere in the Maya area, with two dates, corresponding to 80 and to 126 A.D. (Figure 8) but also the first "new" Olmec sculptures found outside of what was then called the "Olmec Heartland," which misapprehension we also demolished that first research season. On the basis of my finds at this archaeological site, a few years later its landowner (a friend of mine) donated the area of my 1976 excavations to the Guatemalan Nation, and the site now is the newest National Park in Central America.[2] But, I digress: back to the *terremoto,* which also arrived that first week.

The 7.5 (on the Richter Scale) quake hit a little after 3 in the morning of February 4th, 1976. I was sleeping in a bunkhouse on an old rubber plantation, our U.C. Berkeley archaeological field camp. My iron-framed bed began doing the *lambada,* all over the tile floor, as every dead tropical insect, entombed atop the false ceiling above me for the past 60 years, fell through the cracks in the planking as they opened and closed, raining down in a fluttering, choking, cloud. Every dog within a five kilometer radius began barking, and all the roosters up and down the cobbly road past our *Finca* crowed maniacally. Another student, his first time in Latin America, in a panic, demanded to know what was going on. "Shut up, and go back to sleep!" I told

Figure 9: *Millie Chong-Dillon stands in the middle of the street in Antigua, Guatemala, in 1978, two years after the February 4 1976 earthquake. Antigua, the old Capital of Guatemala, was nearly destroyed by massive earthquakes in 1717 and 1773. The seat of government was moved to what is now Guatemala City three years later, where it would itself be heavily damaged two centuries afterwards. In 1978 more damage was still visible in Antigua from the 1717 and 1773 quakes than the 1976 one. Photo by Dillon.*

him, "It's just an earthquake." And so he did, grumbling that such things never happened back in his home state of Wisconsin.

Everybody on the mostly-alluvial Pacific Slope got off comparatively easy, but the volcanic highlands to our immediate north were badly hammered. A great many people were killed outright, and many more were injured and traumatized. The quake, as the contemporary saying went, knocked down every fourth house in Guatemala. Since most were built of adobe brick when their walls fell they crushed a great many people still asleep at 3 A.M. Early rising farmers, however, had a much greater survivorship than *slugabed* town dwellers. The quake pancaked most of the very few overpasses and cement highway bridges in the country, as well as some of the spans in the principal bridges linking the capital city with both the Caribbean and Pacific Coasts, and with all neighboring countries, Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, and Belize. Landslides covered large sections of major thoroughfares in the Guatemalan Highlands, or simply carried them away, down into the *barrancas* below. Car, bus, and train transportation was halted, and would not be re-established for weeks or months to come. Since the quake hit during the dry season, eventually some fallen bridges were bypassed by detours to fords across nearby shallows: high-clearance pickup trucks could get across, but not busses nor family sedans.

Just as transportation shut down, so too did communications. Hundreds of telephone poles snapped or were carried away by landslides, which continued to slide for weeks afterward. Transformers toppled and high tension towers twisted or collapsed. Widespread power outages and downed telephone lines kept most people from getting in touch with each other, much less with anybody outside the country, for weeks on end. Radio and T.V. stations also went dead, only coming back on intermittently. The lucky few with shortwave radios, or better still, those powered by gas or diesel generators, were besieged by frantic, panicked people trying to get in touch with loved ones or with relatives outside the country.

Guatemala City, with roughly half the population of the country, was cut off from most sources of food, medical supplies, and foreign assistance. There was a pervasive sense of *déjà vu* here, for the previous Capital, Antigua Guatemala (Figure 9) had almost been destroyed by even greater earthquakes in 1717 and again in 1773. So in 1776, almost exactly two centuries earlier than the 1976 *temblór*, the seat of government had been moved to the new, ostensibly safer, location.

And then there were the casualties. The 1976 Guatemala quake killed approximately 24,000—this in a country of only 5 million at the time. An equivalent death toll in California, from a similarly deadly quake, would be 150,000 killed outright. Everybody knew somebody who had been killed, or was, even weeks later, still missing. Few families escaped without losing at least one relative. Many thousands more had arms, legs, ribs, and pelvises broken from falling walls, at least three times as many injured as dead.

Figure 10: *The Kekchi Maya Tot family near San Pedro Carchá, Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, in 1990. My good friends Mariano (2nd from left) and Marcelo (4th from left) did archaeology with me for many years in the Maya lowlands. Mariano's oldest son (far left) was born on the morning of February 4th, 1976, his birth triggered by the earthquake. His nick-name has been, from that day onwards, El Niño Terremoto. Also shown are the Tot brothers' wives, their other children, their mother (4th from right), sisters, and nieces and nephews. Photo by Dillon.*

Hundreds more were temporarily or permanently blinded by falling ash, gravel, dirt and mud; those less lucky were asphyxiated. And people continued to be killed days and even weeks afterward. Roads weakened by the quake continued to give out, killing even the most cautious motorists. Dozens of people just walking past quake-damaged homes continued to be killed by sliding and falling 50-lb roof tiles. So, they began walking down the middle of the streets instead, beyond the reach of falling tiles, where they now were hit and killed by drivers, themselves distracted by trying to dodge fallen walls and piles of debris. And aftershock after aftershock continued to pummel us, often dozens each day, some feeling as strong or even stronger than the original, February 4th, *temblór*.

But, there is no tragedy so great that it cannot have a silver lining. In addition to my very good archaeological fortune at Takalik Abaj the same week as the 1976 Earthquake also came new life amidst so much death and destruction. My closest Guatemalan friends, for 40+ years, have been the Tot brothers, Kekchi Maya from Alta Verapaz. Mariano Tot, the elder brother, had struggled to raise a family for many years, but infant mortality, just a theoretical concern for most North Americans, was terribly real for him. All six of Mariano's children had died before their second birthday. Now, as luck would have it, his long-suffering wife went into labor a seventh time on the morning of February 4th, 1976, her contractions stimulated by the great earthquake. Miraculously, the child, a son, survived, grew and thrived (Figure 10). His nick-name has always been, of course, *El Niño Terremoto-* the earthquake kid. Mariano's jinx was finally broken, and more healthy children followed. Gifts from the Earthquake God, they are truly *sons of the shaking earth.*[3]

Weeks after the February 1976 earthquake, we were still cut off from communication with *Guat City*, much less the States. Our little archaeological tribe began making up scenarios around the dinner table, illuminated by the flickering lights powered by our hand-cranked, one-lung 1905 German diesel generator. We composed fictional telegrams to send back to our families up in *gringolandia,* to reassure them that we were alive and well, despite the havoc wrought no great distance away. Our favorite unsent telegram read: *Dr. Graham and all Berkeley students safe and well, but Dr. Heizer smashed in bar.*

Figure 11: *Two years after the 1976 Earthquake, a Guatemalan Air Force Huey landed in my front yard, and three election officials, complete with ballot box, got out. A few minutes later, a second helicopter landed, bearing two opposition party electioneers. All five vote-counters squatted in my field camp for three days, but collected only one (1) ballot. I later found that 12,000 people killed in the 1976 Earthquake voted in my jungle field camp: ghosts voting in my own little ghost town. Dillon photo, taken through the mosquito netting of my field camp.*

Little did we know how frantically our families back home in California were trying to learn of our fate, nor how often U.C. Berkeley representatives tried to establish contact with anybody in Guatemala who might know what had become of us. Finally, several days after the quake, U.S. Embassy employees in Guatemala City began compiling a list of every U.S. Citizen known or suspected of being in-country on the morning of February 4th, 1976. They then matched this list against Americans reporting in alive, and those reported as dead. Unfortunately for us archaeologists, a *second* Mark Johnson was in Guatemala during the earthquake. The overworked U.S. Embassy staff confused him with the *real Mark Johnson*, our own Berkeley student. When the University was finally able to get through to the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala City, they were told: *"Good news! Congratulations! Mark Johnson is ALIVE!"* The University of California now informed our families that while *one* of us had survived, *the others* were still unaccounted for, and regrettably, presumed dead.

The great 1976 earthquake continued to resonate long after the shaking stopped. In 1978, I was completing my doctoral dissertation field research in the Maya lowlands of Alta Verapaz, northern Guatemala.[4] If Guatemala is the "most Indian" country in North and Central America, then Alta Verapaz is the "most Indian" part of Guatemala, both culturally and demographically. The Indian auxiliaries that came south from Mexico with Pedro de Alvarado in 1524 to conquer the Maya called it *Tezulutlán*—the Land of War—while the Quiché Maya of the Guatemalan Highlands to its south called it *Xibalba*—the Land of the Dead.

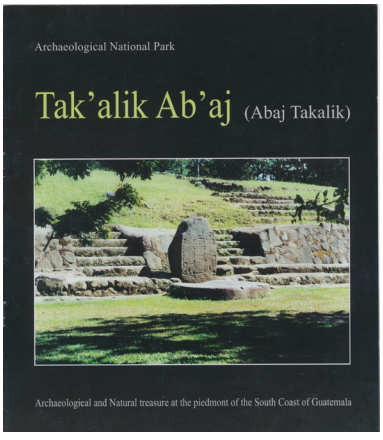


Figure 12 (Left): *Cover of the Takalik Abaj National Park English-language brochure, with Stela 5 and Altar 8 prominently displayed, now visited by tens of thousands of archaeological tourists annually.* ***Figure 13 (Right):*** *Native Priests, their attendants, and family members pray and conduct modern Maya ceremonials before the ancient Maya sculptures I discovered and excavated during the great 1976 Guatemala earthquake. Prayers are still offered to the Lord of the Underworld, the Earthquake/Volcano God. Both courtesy of Miguel Orrego Corso.*

My first explorations in Alta Verapaz in 1975 were on foot and by dugout canoe, my second in 1976, only weeks after the great earthquake, were by mule. By 1978 I was living in an abandoned oil camp, surrounded by a 200-foot-tall canopy forest. Scarlet macaws nested nearby, and jaguars prowled through the collapsing structures at night, their pawprints visible in the mud by the dawn's early light. My nearest neighbors were a Kekchi family 32 kilometers downriver, by boat. Only a few kilometers south of the Mexican border, it was a free-fire zone: I was alternately visited by guerillas and by Army patrols: truly it was still *The Land of War.*

A week before the 1978 presidential elections an Air Force helicopter landed in my front yard (Figure 11), and three civilians got out, with a bright blue wooden box. The chopper took off, and the guys staggered uphill towards my archaeological redoubt. They were electioneers, complete with ballot box. They would, I was informed, stay in my camp for the next three days to ensure that all votes for General Romeo Lucas, the "official party" candidate, were counted.

Four years earlier, my almost-deserted archaeology camp had been a booming oil camp with 800 residents. But when the Guatemalan elections of 1978 rolled around, just me, one other *gringo*, and three of our Kekchi Maya workmen were living there. I told the electioneers that the *boom town* had become a *ghost town* in just four short years. They had come to *Xibalba,* after all.

Halfway through this explanation came the sound of a second helicopter, this one civilian. It also touched down in my front yard, and two more strangers jumped out before it egg-beatered back towards civilization. The two new guys represented the opposition party: they had invaded my camp to ensure that anybody preferring the underdog could vote for him instead of General Lucas. So, for three days I had to put up and feed five guys in two antagonistic groups in my field camp, until both helicopters returned to haul their carcasses back to Guatemala City. They had taken exactly one (1) vote, from Mariano's younger brother, Marcelo (Figure 10). Only he had his *cédula de vecindad* (identity card) in his possession, qualifying him to vote legally.

Several months later I chanced upon a tattered post-election newspaper tabulating the voting results for the 1978 election precinct-by-precinct. I read that my own jungle field camp had contributed more than 12,000 votes to Romeo Lucas, quite a few more than the *single ballot* cast by Marcelo Tot. I instantly realized what this "new" total meant: all of the additional 12k+ voters were *dead*. They had been killed in the 1976 earthquake, but

their names had not yet been removed from the voting rolls. Thousands of ghosts had cast thousands of invisible votes in my own jungle ghost town in the very heart of *Xibalba.*

The final chapter in this long, if not learned, earthquake story came exactly 40 years after the 1976 *temblór* itself. My historian father died in 2016, and I hauled three truckloads of his unpublished manuscripts, correspondence, etc. from the San Francisco Bay Area down to where I live in exile in the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles. While sorting through my Dad's papers, I found an unopened letter written by my late mother in February 1976. Because the mails were not being delivered to Guatemala and then after the *"Mark Johnson is Alive!"* report I was presumed dead, she never posted it. My mother set it aside, and then forgot all about it after my miraculous return from the *Land of the Dead*. Forty years passed between her writing this letter and my reading it. My mother wrote how much she loved me, and how proud she was of me, regardless of whether I was living or dead. She ended with a benediction typical of my family:

Stay ornery, and shoot straight. Live! Mom.

To this day I don't know if her penultimate word was a misspelling of *Love* or a gringified attempt to translate the Spanish exhortation *¡Viva! (Long may you live!)* into English. Either way, her blessing is a fitting conclusion to the saga of the 1976 *terremoto* that I and my friends, both Mayan and Californian, endured so long ago, so far away.

Native Priests now make pilgrimages to the Ancient Maya sculptures I discovered and excavated in 1976, at Takalik Abaj National Park (Figure 12). They light sacred fires, burn incense, and say prayers to the *Lord of the Underworld* and the Volcano Gods (Figure 13), all of whom are still listening.

Notes

1. ***Dynamite Squads:*** for their 1906 actions during the post-earthquake fires in San Francisco California, see Dillon, Dillon and Dillon, 2012a and 2012b.
2. ***Takalik Abaj:*** for a description of the archaeological site, and what was found there, see Dillon 2012.
3. ***Sons of the Shaking Earth:*** Eric Wolf (1959) "nailed it" in his wonderfully entertaining book on the archaeology, history, and ethnology of Guatemala and Southern Mexico.
4. ***Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, Archaeology:*** my earliest research is detailed in Dillon 1977. For a summary of my 40+ years of field research there, see Woodfill, Dillon, Wolf, Avendaño, and Canter, 2015.

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1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake

Paul F. Clark

In 1989 I resided in Indio and served as Supervising Planner for the Riverside County Planning Department's satellite office in the Coachella Valley. In the early fall that year the main Riverside office signed up all department administrators to attend a short-term leadership "enrichment" seminar at the University of California, Riverside. I, with some reluctance, attended these weekly classes driving an hour plus one-way and back in the evening. One of these classes met at usual on October 17. At the half-time break word came of a "major" earthquake in the San Francisco area—later described as the Loma Prieta Earthquake (6.9 magnitude).

Few cell phones existed then, and one generally used a land line to telephone. The first news caused many in first responder departments to leave. I remembered my uncle in the San Jose area, but knew I could do little then and stuck around the class which let out early. I intended to call my parents when I got home, as they resided in Orange County and may have heard something. I listened to the radio on the way home for early news. Once in Indio, I phoned as intended, but very soon realized with surprise all telephone lines were jammed, even to Orange County. It seemed everyone outside California thought the entire state lay in ruins. I waited until the following day to reach my mother and discovered all was well with my San Jose uncle (only all the table lamps had fallen, some broken). I don't know if our cell phones and satellite links today represent improvement, but beware of communication tie-ups even if an earthquake hits one part of California.

1991 Sierra Madre Earthquake

Laron "Terry" Terrell

I awoke to the delightful sound of the Santa Anita Canyon's stream spilling over rocks and splashing into the ponds beneath my cabin's bedroom window. I cancelled the alarm on my plastic penguin clock before it disturbed the natural silence at 7 AM. It was a humorous gift from my last birthday. However, there was nothing humorous about the racket this plastic Antarctic imitation put forth while squalling and flapping its wings.

While on my back trying to convince my body to rise and shine, I said to myself, "Self, this feather bed is so soft and comfortable I don' t want to get up." As I wiggled my way deeper into the softness Self replied:

"Boss, today is Friday, the end of the week, and we have to finish the darkroom. Get your skinny butt out of the sack and let's get movin'." Self can be so gentle and gracious, but not this morning. This cabin was my "Over the Rainbow" hiding place from the world. "Self" wasn't buying it this early.

An early morning in Big Santa Anita Canyon just north of Arcadia could bring forth a brand-new day of Mom Natures' offerings. Her up-canyon breeze gave movement to the many green leaves on the Alders growing in the grass along the stream. By this time of the year there were but a few of the spring flowers still in bloom, mostly the yellow California Poppies. All seemed to be waiting for the sun. This view from my bedroom window always brought forth a smile and a whispered, "Thank you" for Mom's efforts. Sunrise in this deep stream-cut canyon was about 10 AM. All was right with the world today.

On afternoons and weekends, a few hikers would pass by within the shelter of the trees on the mountain trail seventy-five or so feet above the cabin, unaware of my presence. Occasionally, a wanderer or two would travel upstream from Hermit Falls just a few hundred yards down the canyon. The isolated location of my cabin was a joy when hiding just a few miles away from millions of my brethren living in Southern California.

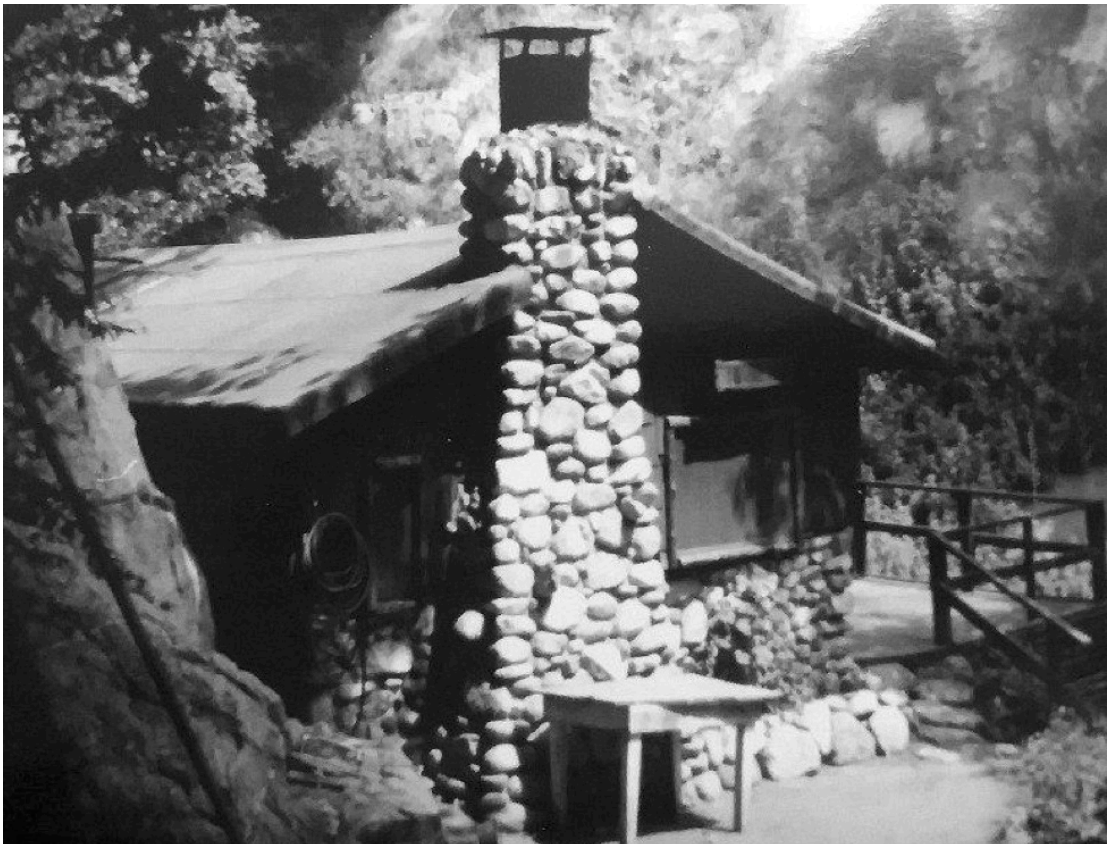


Figure 14: *My cabin in Big Santa Anita Canyon, Chantry Flats, north of Arcadia. Terrell photo.*

I had to get up and ready myself for the hike out to my truck. On mornings like this, my body was somewhat reluctant to part with the feather bed and start the day with my feet on the cold linoleum. The first of the fun activities after getting dressed was to place my empty backpack on my back, lock the door, and start the mile and a half hike up the canyon trail, gaining 600 feet of elevation to the pack station parking lot.

My son Michael would be waiting for me so we could finish our current project. We were converting a very large closet to a small darkroom in a condo for a customer. I hoped to finish that day, Friday, as I wanted my weekend to be open.

While hiking I thought of the many city dwellers getting up about this time to crawl into their sweats and cavort around their neighborhoods to get some exercise. I got mine, just hiking to my truck. I trudged up the trail a few hundred feet short of the next switchback leading to the poorly-paved Forestry fire road. I was listening to my Sony headphone radio, which took my mind from this miserable uphill hike.

Much to my surprise, a very loud rumbling sound pulsated from behind me. As I turned, believing it to be a close, large helicopter, the sound ceased and the narrow trail on which I stood began to shake. The next instant rocks, gravel and dirt began rolling and sliding down the mountain. I said to myself, "Self, this is an earthquake!"

Self-replied, "Boss, let's make a break for cover mucho pronto!" Farther along the trail, about 15 feet, was a rock wall next to the trail with some overhanging brush. I stumbled along the shaking trail to the cover. With my outstretched arms I hugged the mountain under the brush. I could feel some dirt and small gravel sifting through the overhead vegetation. I was hoping there were no large bolders rolling down the mountain

straight towards my head. I didn't have time to discuss any of my thoughts with "Myself" at that time. I believe I was plugged into "Survival" mode and operating on instincts. My fingerprints and nail imprints may still be in that rock wall.

About that time, the man on my earphones radio said he just felt an earthquake. "Welcome to the Earthquake Club, Kemosabe," passed through my mind. I assumed this was the Big One for which everybody had been waiting from the westerly direction the shock waves were moving.

The shaking finally stopped. I'm sure the quake was measured in seconds, but the duration seemed like minutes while hugging a mountain and hiding under the pucker brush. The narrow trail, with standing room only and hundreds of feet down beyond the outer edge, served as my balcony. I released my grip on the mountain and turned toward the canyon, making sure the trail was still under my boots.

I witnessed an amazing sight. Rocks, dirt and everything else not nailed down was sliding or rolling down the mountains. Huge clouds of dust were rising from the mountain sides and the canyon floor. Every bird in the canyon was airborne and there seemed to be hundreds. Many small avalanches of rocks, logs and boulders roared down the mountainside in all directions. I again looked at the trail which still seemed to be okay. Unbelievable! Had I not been on this trail to witness Mom Nature at her best, I would have not believed the downhill relocation of her stuff. Every inch of this canyon had been disturbed in some way. Finally, after 10 or so minutes, Mr. Gravity ceased his grip on the mountain sides, and all returned to a rearranged normal—all except the birds and the clouds of dust. The birds were still flying in circles above the canyon floor trying to decide what to do as the stream trees were somewhat hidden within the dust. Finally, I gave up looking at this amazing sight and turned up the trail.

Much to my surprise, I was not in a state of panic. I was not shaking nor did I need a change of under lovelies. My reaction was almost as if I were watching this earthly shift on a science TV program.

Onward and upward, I carefully stepped over rocks, piles of dirt, and edges of the trail that had broken away. I finally arrived at the pack station parking lot.

The pack station owners were still in the parking area chatting with another cabin owner. The pack donkeys, mules, and a couple of horses all had their ears at attention. They were walking up and down the terraced corrals in an uneasy manner. The old barns and the pack station house were still standing.

The other cabin owner was at the parking lot during the quake. She was going to drive down the mountain road to open her business for the day in Monrovia. I followed her vehicle down the mountain road in my truck, stopping many times to move rocks, trees, and tree limbs and other products of nature from our path. Drive time was normally about 10 minutes. Self said, "Boss, this may take us a little less than forever to move all of this horsepucky to clear a roadway." This downhill tour took at least 45 minutes.

A TV station helicopter flew up the canyon, no doubt looking for earthquake news. We thought we would make the 11 o'clock news because we were the only two people crazy enough to attempt to drive this newly created obstacle course. After relating my recent earthquake shenanigans to Mike and the customer lady, the rest of that Friday went as usual. We did finish the darkroom and received the contracted payment.

That evening, the news stated the shaker was 5.8 on the Richter scale, and 7.5 miles northeast of Sierra Madre. The quake was responsible for 2 deaths, approximately 100 injuries, and $34 to 40 million in damage. The town of Sierra Madre later reported to have suffered $12.5 million in damages as well.

Some of my Sierra Madre friends reported broken glassware, marble busts and a few other items falling from shelves and mantels. Everything else in their home survived. Luckily, my cabin survived without a scratch. It was so old, major damage might have been viewed as an improvement.

What did we learn from Mom Nature's moving the earth a little? Time will tell.

The Great Northridge Quake According to a Rock-Solid Trail Boss

Jim Macklin

1994 Northridge Earthquake

First, you need to know that I am not a native Californian with extensive experience in earthquakes, family stories about earthquakes or familiarity with Lucy Jones, television celebrity seismologist at Caltech.

I grew up near Newark, Ohio, where the Newark Air Force Base is located. This is relevant because the base is situated there because it is the most seismologically stable location in America. The Newark Air Force Base, which was actually located in a suburb called Heath, was responsible for metrology—measuring and calibrating motion to control missile, aircraft and spacecraft stability. Words like avionics and inertial guidance systems in Newark were as common as slip faults and thrust faults are to Angelenos. Gyroscopes were not just toy tops to us growing up there. So, you could say that I was blessed with a very stable upbringing.

After college, I lived in Manhattan and worked down in the Wall Street area at the southern tip of the island. Although Wall Street has had its ups and downs, in the days of the original Dutch settlers of New Amsterdam, it was the street which ran along the northern wall of the community. The wall provided a degree of stability since it kept the citizens' livestock in and the wild animals and native people out. So, you could say that the wall was an early application of control risk mitigation over Wall Street operations.

When my firm, Arthur Andersen & Co., decided to send me to the Los Angeles office in 1973, the first thing lots of people asked me was, "Aren't you worried about the earthquakes?" Being the stable person that I was, I always responded, "No." But, once Amy and I moved to California, I was moved to do some research on the topic. I talked to neighbors and colleagues about their experiences. This was just two years after the Sylmar earthquake. One of my colleagues reported that his family's house in that area was heavily damaged. He remembered that cans in the kitchen cabinets were thrown across the kitchen and dented the opposite wall and that their family dog was killed when the refrigerator slid and pinned it against the opposite counter. I found one USGS map of Southern California faults that looked like a jigsaw puzzle. Everywhere in Southern California had overlapping faults! Some of the pieces in the jigsaw puzzle were bigger than others, but none were very big at all. So, you could say every place has its faults, but this was ridiculous!

In 1983, I left Arthur Andersen & Co. and joined the Accounting and Management Information Systems Department faculty at California State University, Northridge. There were twelve years of seismic stability followed by the events of January 17, 1994. There are lots of descriptions and photos of the destruction on the CSUN campus on that morning at 4:31 am on Martin Luther King Day. Because it was so early and a national holiday, there were relatively few people on campus. This was one time that I was glad I lived nearly forty miles from campus in Arcadia! We all know that there was extensive damage on campus, ultimately costing over $500 million to repair. Deferred maintenance of infrastructure and plant is a major problem for American universities, so, you could say the earthquake helped CSUN solve much of that problem and allowed it to modernize its physical plant at the beginning of the technology revolution.

I waited for two days before venturing out to Northridge. When I drove down the streets, many of the block walls around residences had fallen down or were heavily damaged. There were places where gas fires were still burning, and water main leaks were still flowing uncontrolled. On campus, finding parking was no longer a problem. Later, one of my fellow professors told me that his parents had been so freaked out by the Northridge earthquake that they were selling their house and leaving the area. When I asked where they were going, he

Figure 15: *Commemorative t-shirts of the 1994 Northridge Eathquake. Jim Macklin collection.*

told me they were moving to Santa Barbara. Here were people seriously not clear on the circumstances!

My office in 1994 was on the eighth floor in Sierra Tower, an eight-story office structure that was built astride two classroom buildings, Sierra Hall North and Sierra Hall South, which were just four stories high. My office was the fourth office from the south end on the top floor. In the earthquake, the four office floors built over Sierra Hall South collapsed onto the roof of Sierra South. The wall of my office, thus, became the outer south wall of Sierra Tower.

When I asked the emergency workers about using an elevator for Sierra Tower, one of them escorted me up to my office. The office was a total mess. All the bookshelves had been tossed around, and my books and papers were all over the floor along with the ceiling tiles and the metal framework on which they had been attached. Dust hung in the air.

One interesting thing I observed was a ceremonial plastic clock in a brass frame that my students had given me at a surprise 50th birthday party sprung on me the prior year. The clock was battery-operated, so, when the earthquake hit, it was thrown to the floor and the battery was knocked out. The clock therefore showed the exact time of the earthquake: 4:31 am. I never put the battery back in, wanting a permanent memento of the quake. There was also a dent in the brass frame of the clock where it hit the floor.

I gathered up a few essentials I could find needed to start the spring semester and made an appointment with the emergency workers to return several days later. However, when I returned, my office was completely cleaned out – not just the fallen ceiling tiles and dirt but also all my books, papers and records that I had stored in the desk and filing cabinets. I was astonished, since the workers had assured me that I would still have access to my stuff. My escort assured me that the record control guy in the ground floor lobby would be able to tell me where they had stored my valuable books and records.

At the bottom of the elevator, the record

control guy spent a long time going through binders of sheets on which were recorded where the professors' belongings had been stored based upon the room number from which they had been taken. The guy was thrilled to find the records for the contents of Office 807 of Sierra Tower. He informed me that I should get in touch with somebody named James Macklin to recover my stuff. I casually informed him that that would be a problem because I was James Macklin and I had no idea where the boxes with my stuff may have gone. So, you could say that this situation gave me a chance to practice the stoic principles to which I am committed. In spite of meaningful and diligent searching, the folks could not locate my office contents.

So, life went on. At the CSUN President's insistence, we started the semester just three weeks after the earthquake. Both classes and offices were in temporary modular trailers that FEMA scavenged from all over the country. One of them smelled like the barn in Ohio where I used to milk cows early in the morning. On the first Monday morning of the semester, I found the trailer where my class was supposed to meet. However, it was raised up on blocks with no stairs, its doors were locked and there was no electricity, lights, or heat. So I stood outside, handed out copies of the syllabus, logged in the students who showed up and told them to come back on Wednesday to give it another try. I think we made the semester happen in spite of the reality of the situation. The students, the faculty and the administrators worked together with good humor, flexibility and spirit. When we run into each other even today, we seem to maintain a special camaraderie.

In October of the following semester on a Friday afternoon, I received a call from one of the staff people in the English Department. She told me that about thirty or forty storage boxes had been delivered to their trailer. They had checked out the contents and they appeared to belong to me. She said they did not have room to store them, so they would just leave them on their outside deck for me to pick up. This was not what I was expecting for my Friday afternoon. I was thrilled that my stuff finally appeared, but the surrounding conditions were not positive. Plus, the weather folks were expecting an early rain storm starting Friday evening, all of which was supposed to fall on the northwestern part of the San Fernando Valley. At least, that was the way it seemed to me in the circumstances. I made a desperate call to the staff in the Accounting & MIS Department to save my stuff. I backed my car up to the English Department deck and started jamming as much as I could into it.

Not only had the emergency people packed my stuff, but they included all sorts of junk, like the fallen and broken ceiling tiles. Luckily for me, the department people were able to arrange a last-minute truck to pick up all those boxes and stack them in the trailer where my office was located just as sprinkles began to fall. I did not finish getting through all those boxes until after I retired in 2010. In fact, there may still be one of them sitting in our garage now. So, you could say that my faith in stoicism has been vindicated.

The College of Business was lucky that a new business school building was just being completed when the earthquake hit. Because of its modern construction, it was not damaged as badly as some of the other buildings on campus. The repairs were made, and we moved out of the trailers into our new building in just several months. Other departments were stuck in the trailers for years until the university recovered.

So, you could say that I do not need to be worried about earthquakes but can continue to believe that I had died and gone to heaven when I got to California.

1994 Northridge Earthquake

Abe Hoffman

When the Northridge Earthquake occurred on January 17, 1994, my wife and I were out of town, some forty miles northwest of Los Angeles, enjoying a weekend getaway at a hotel in Oxnard, right on the Pacific Coast. At 4:31 we were almost tossed out of bed, the shaking accompanied by a loud roaring sound. Although the event would be called the Northridge earthquake, we felt it very strongly more than forty miles away. The quake knocked out the power in the area. My wife and I dressed quickly in the dark and went to the hotel lobby, where dozens of guests were gathered.

We were very concerned about not only my son Joshua, who was working on an all-night movie shoot in North Hollywood, but also his younger brother Greg, fifteen years old, old enough to stay at home alone while his parents were off and a weekend vacation and his brother was gone all night on the film shoot. The landline phone at the hotel worked intermittently. We were standing near the reception desk when the hotel phone rang. The clerk answered it and called out, "Is Sue Hoffman here?" My wife took the phone; it was her mother calling to say that a major earthquake had hit the San Fernando Valley. Sue said we were all right, had also felt it, and would head for home once it was daylight. Then the phone went dead.

We were very worried about our sons, especially Greg, who was home alone. We went out to the parking lot and listened on the car radio to the news. The epicenter was said to be in the Northridge neighborhood; at the time we lived in nearby Reseda. My wife saw a woman standing a few yards from us, talking on a cell phone. In 1994 cell phones were still a fairly new technology and, unlike today, relatively few people had them. My wife went over to the woman and asked if she could borrow the phone to call home to see if our sons were safe.

"I'm sorry," said the woman. "My husband doesn't allow me to share our phone with anyone."

When my wife told me what the woman had said, I made a vow that when I bought a cell phone—which I did a short time later—if anyone asked me if I could lend him my phone because of an emergency, I would never turn that person down.

As soon as it was daylight we drove back to the San Fernando Valley. Traffic was surprisingly light. Exiting the 101 Freeway at the Tampa Avenue exit, we could see little evidence of earthquake damage as we drove to our house. What we did see a lot of were cinder block walls that had tumbled down onto sidewalks and into the streets. These walls, ubiquitous as boundaries for residential yards separating one neighbor from another, were not reinforced with rebar. Putting these walls back up, this time with rebar in them, would take months as homeowners negotiated with construction companies, handymen, and whoever offered a fair price, some of them unscrupulous.

Arriving at our house, we were relieved to see Joshua and Greg unharmed. When the earthquake hit, Greg, knowing that I kept a flashlight in the headboard in my bedroom, left his bedroom. Feeling his way in the dark to our bedroom, he climbed on the bed and found the flashlight. He also found out that a guardian angel must have been watching over him, for the bed was covered with shards from a mirror that had been on the wall behind the headboard and shattered on hitting the bed. None of the broken mirror pieces had cut him.

Our bed showed how lucky my wife and I were to not be home when the earthquake hit. This was a three-day weekend; Monday was the Martin Luther King birthday federal holiday. We could have stayed home, but we'd gone on a weekend vacation instead.

When we moved into the house in 1985, we bought a new bedroom set, and I wasn't home when it was delivered. The delivery men placed the dresser where my wife wanted it, the six-foot high nightstands on each side at the head of the bed, mounted the two big mirrors on the wall behind the headboard, and placed a light bridge spanning the two nightstands. I assumed that the light bridge was nailed or screwed down.

I assumed wrong.

When everything started shaking, the sixty-pound Lightbridge fell down onto the pillows where our heads would have been had we not gone on our little vacation. Add to that the broken mirror pieces, and, well, I might not be writing this account today.

Bookshelves in the room I used for my office were tipped over, spilling books and other stuff onto the floor; not a big deal to clean up. The kitchen was another matter. Cabinet doors had flung open, and a glass bowl filled with artificial sweetener landed on the floor, apparently at the same time the water cooler tipped over, creating a sticky mess. Some dishes were broken. We had neither water nor electricity. One of the stove's burner trivets was missing; we had no idea where it had gone. We would have to clean up, prop up, and sort out the mess, but our house wasn't damaged. The cinder block walls enclosing the back yard fared worse. At the front of our house, between our neighbor on the west side and our house, there was a crack in the ground that varied in size from a quarter to a half inch in width, running across the sidewalk, the street, the opposite sidewalk, and right up to and inside the home of the family living across the street from us. Our asphalt driveway was crumpled.

If there was one positive side to the earthquake, it was in getting to know our neighbors. People we'd said little more than "good afternoon" to compared how frightened they were, the damages to household furniture, and what they were going to do without water, electricity, or natural gas.

Joshua had parked the RV in front of our house. He admitted to filling the water tank which turned out inadvertently (and disobediently) to be a very good idea. That evening our cul-de-sac held a community barbecue, since there was no way whatever was in freezers or refrigerators would keep for long. No one had a generator. Although we had no power—it would be up to two weeks before water and power would be restored—San Fernando Valley residents did get one lucky break: the sewer lines had not broken. In short, we could use our house's toilets. Our neighbor on the east side had a crack in his swimming pool. He generously shared the pool water with his neighbors, so we made several trips a day to and from his pool, lugging buckets of water and keeping them handy to use in the toilets.

Our family soon realized how little we were prepared for a major earthquake. We had several flashlights (the batteries were dead in one of the two in our cars), but flashlights, while useful in showing where you are going, were of limited value in illuminating areas, as in sitting around a table. Apart from car radios, we had only one battery-operated radio. Some items in the RV proved very helpful, such as the stove for cooking. But January in California meant it got dark around 5:30 p.m., leaving us with lots of time on our hands until electricity was restored.

We learned many lessons on personal survival after the Northridge earthquake. Frightening as it was, if you weren't dead or injured, the biggest problem to be faced would be what to do next. Water and electricity, *kaput*. Natural gas—many people shut it off, even though no gas lines were broken. How would we deal with issues of hygiene if the sewer lines were damaged? Some students in my California History class facetiously (at least I hope they were facetious) said they would dig a hole in the back yard. Really? Does a family of four dig four holes, or one large one? And what happens a few hours later when someone has to go again? And what of people who live in apartments? No back yards for them. Obviously, it's better to think clearly and plan ahead than to act badly when in a state of panic.

The secret for dealing with the hours and days following a major earthquake (actually, it's an open secret for anyone to think about) is to prepare in advance for a possible Big One. That means lanterns, not just flashlights; water storage in 2 ½ gallon containers (easy to carry), and put in a safe and accessible place; clothing and personal items stored in car trunks; and, finally, a list of everything anyone can think of to have in case of an emergency. A disaster isn't just an earthquake, as victims of major fires and floods have experienced. The Boy Scouts have long had that simple slogan: *Be prepared.*

Corral Chips

Book Donation News

Miss the Rendezvous book auction? Fear not! Consult Brian D. Dillon for the full catalog of books for sale. Additionally, the Corral has received the many new donations that are awaiting categorization. For future updates, please check out the Corral webpage.

Sixty boxes, primarily Western themed history books, Westerners publications, and several novels, were recently donated by the family of past member Edward "Pete" Parker from Fullerton. He passed away several years ago, with his impressive collection housed at the family home. Rachel Van Exel, Pete's daughter, recently chose our Corral as their new home, knowing they would be enjoyed by our members, in the same way that Pete loved his books. As a reminder to our current membership, we always welcome books and would appreciate any publications or artworks when downsizing or as a bequest. This will allow newer members to experience our history and enhance their collections. Pete's books will be made available for purchase as soon as cataloging is completed. Thank you, Rachel, for your substantial donation. Thank you, Jim Macklin, Therese Melbar, and Jim Shuttleworth, for picking up and boxing these books this past August.

The Corral has also received a gift from the estate of our Past Sheriff for 1987, James B. Gulbranson. Eighty-eight large portrait photos, many signed, of our past members, including many Past Sheriffs, has been digitized. A decision will be made of how best to archive and share these Corral treasures.

Membership News

The Los Angeles Corral is happy to announce the memberships of no less then 18 new Westerners in 2018. Welcome aboard!

Charley Allen	Barbara Goldeen
Ryan Baum	Michael Johnson
Richard Besone	Gary F. Kurutz
Carla L. Bollinger	Amanda Martinez
Matthew Boxt	Linda Mazur
Stephen Brandt	Barbara Mouron
Richard D. Collins	Michael Post
Robert R. Dykstra	Liliana Urrutia
Jovanny Gochez	Larry Vredenburgh

Additionally, several existing members have shown their grit as Westerners and have earned new ranks. Alan Pollock became an Active Member. Therese Melbar, Patrick Mulvey, and Aaron Tate were elevated to Associate Members. And finally, Robert A. Clark, Ernie Hovard, and Ernie Marquez were recognized as Honorary Members. Congrats!

Award News

A hearty, "Hip, hip, hurray!" to all of our outstanding award winners in the Corral. 2018 was a busy year for accolades. For the second year in a row, the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners received the Heads Up Award for Outstanding Large Corral, so thanks to everyone for your participation!

Our Corral also lassoed up a host of individual awards. First and second place for the Fred Olds Poetry Award went to Tim Heflin and Barbara Goldeen respectively—Barbara joined us just last year, but was a big winner on her first try! First place in the Coke Wood Award for Best Published Article went to Bob Chandler, while Brian Dillon received third place, his *7th* consecutive Coke Wood Award! Rounding out the Corral's publishing chops, Robert Dykstra received third place in the Case-Watson Best Book Award for *Dodge City and the Birth of the Wild West.*

Many thanks to Brian Dillon, Gary Turner, and others who worked on the nomination packages sent in earlier this year!

Rendezvous, October 2018 . . .

Westerners from across Los Angeles and beyond rendezvoused for a fun-filled afternoon at the Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum, a pair of historic ranch houses in the City of Industry. Guided tours offered curious Westerners an inside look into the history and architecture of the site. Anglo-American rancher-turned-banker William Workman constructed his Victorian-style house in stages, beginning in 1844 during the twilight years of Mexican California. The property transfered to the related Temple family following the failure of Workman's bank in 1876. A half-century later in 1927, Walter Temple—flush with oil money—built the opulent *casa nueva* in the Spanish colonial style. Temple spared no expense to ensure that everything was historically authentic to the last detail—down to the Spanish colonial refrigerator, telephone, and record player! After a Depression-era stint as a boys' military academy, both houses eventually opened to the public as a museum in 1981.

Meanwhile, the Los Angeles Corral battled the rising tide of illiteracy with its bi-annual silent book auction. What started as a veritable mountain of donated books and artworks for sale steadily shrank to a knoll, thus enriching the Westerners' already-bursting libraries. Guests mingled over drinks, enjoyed a fine selection of Mexican cuisine for dinner, and celebrated the Corral's accomplishments. Former Sheriff Brian Dillon announced a successful *rendezvous* with the Home Corral's headquarters in *Baja Oklahoma* (aka Texas), to receive a number of well-earned accolades, including the coveted Best Large Corral award. Finally, the highlight of the outing came over dessert of flan—a lively and hilarious musical performance by the barbershop quartet, *The Velvet Frogs*. Their motto: "Clean mind. Clean body. Take your pick." Sadly, there is not room here to recite all of their best jokes.

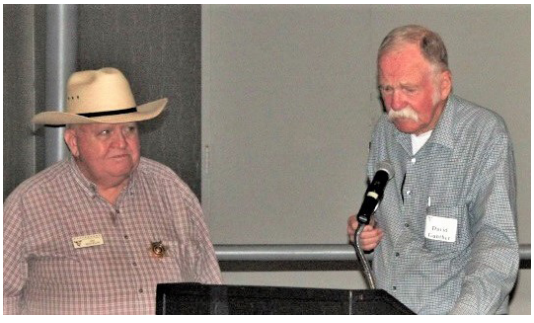
The festivities came to an end as evening fell, but fond memories of the outing will live on with all the Westerners who attended. May next years' Rendezvous be just as great!

— John Dillon

2017 Sheriff Brian Dillon delivers the 2017 Heads Up Award for the most outstanding large Corral from Westerners International to 2018 Acting Sheriff Jim Macklin.

Top Left: *Past Sheriff Brian Dillon presents the 2nd Place 2017 Fred Olds Outstanding Cowboy Poet Award to Barbara Goldeen. Barbara won the Westerners International award during her first year of membership in the Corral.* ***Above:*** *David Kimes and Eric Nelson, happy contributors to the bar donations vase.* ***Left:*** *Ann Shea and Therese Melbar meet and greet Corral members at the gateway to the Homestead Museum.* ***Below:*** *Mary Riegler gets the Sweet Adeline treatment from the Velvet Frogs as Peggy Lee Hartwell looks on skeptically. Photos by Paul McClure & Jim Macklin.*

Monthly Roundup . . .



September 2018

David Gunther

All aboard for the train out west! For the Westerner's September 2018 roundup, David Gunther, a former Santa Fe Railroad locomotive engineer, shared his knowledge about railroad memorabilia. Writing in 1908 about the Santa Fe's route, Charles Fletcher Lummis observed, "There is no railroad in the world…which penetrates such a wonderland of the pictorial in geography and humanity."

Indeed, Mr. Gunther began the night discussing the visual art that the Santa Fe Railroad inspired. As literal engines of capitalism, railroads sought to create new markets. Railroads thereby hired artists such as Thomas Moran and Louis Akin, whose landscape paintings enticed would-be travelers to the West on the Santa Fe Railroad. For artists, perks of working on railroad advertisements included free transportation (of course), hotel accommodations, and meals. This proved a great success for the railroads. Towns were transformed with the arrival of the iron horse. Albuquerque, a place of scarcely 1,500 people, saw its population increase to 15,000 with the railroad's arrival. Los Angeles, today a megalopolis, was only a sleepy town of a few thousand in the mid 19th century.

The recurring theme of the Santa Fe's advertisements was the route's singular beauty. Works like "Grand Canyon from Hermit Rim Road" by Thomas Moran displayed the untamed glory of the desert landscape, while other works captured the majesty of nature, architecture, and native peoples.

Mr. Gunther continued the night with a discussion about railroad book memorabilia. One of the standout works was Richard White's *Railroaded*, which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 2011. Another exciting work was *By the Way*, which informed travelers about the many different places outside the window along the train's route.

Mr. Gunther convinced the audience that traveling by train was much more than just a trip from A to B. Riding the Santa Fe resembled a modern-day spa experience. A man could pay $.85 for a shave, $1.35 for a haircut, $1 for a massage, and $.35 for laundry valet services. No discussion about the Santa Fe would be complete without including Fred Harvey, who partnered with the railroad in 1876. His efforts transformed the quality of food that was served on railroad cars. He also built "Harvey House" hotels staffed by "Harvey Girls" along important Santa Fe route stops, catering to the railroad's patrons. Today, some of the most collectable railroad memorabilia includes Santa Fe Railroad dinner menus (at one point there was a new menu for every single day) and chinaware.

In-house publications were printed by the Santa Fe Railroad for the benefit and recreation of its employees. As employee safety was of paramount importance, "Rules and Regulations" manuals were essential to run trains accident-free. For recreation, employees could turn to the *Santa Fe Employee's Magazine* or *The Santa Fe Magazine*. Mr. Gunther rounded off the night by sharing a picture of his copy of *The Little Engine That Could*; the following reads on the title page: "This Book Belongs to David Gunther from Larry Jean + Ronnie Lee, Nov. 6, 1944." The Los Angeles Corral of Westerners thanks Mr. Gunther for his informative talk on a subject so dear to him and fascinating to us.

— Dennis Bermudez

November 2018

Paul McClure

By longstanding Los Angeles Corral tradition, the November Roundup is always "Hat Night," when all Westerners are invited to compete for the most interesting hats. A secret panel of judges selected three finalists: Therese Melbar won 3rd place for her homespun bonnet, Gary Turner came 2nd with his bobcat fur cap, and Abe Hoffman won 1st prize for his squid hat. These silly hats were matched by equally silly prizes, with the three winners taking home animatronic talking parrots, singing chihuahuas, and maraca-shaking chili peppers respectively.

After the exciting Hat Night competition, former Sheriff Paul McClure graced the Westerners with a presentation on the history of the West in "Western" dance. Paul, an avid dancer and country dance instructor, spoke authoritatively on the successive eras of Western popular culture.

According to McClure, the "Old West" began in 1865 at the end of the American Civil War and ended in 1908 with the first mass-produced automobile, the Ford Model T. However, the "Social West" already romanticized cowboy culture as early as 1878, with the opening of the first Western dance hall in New Braunfels, Texas. Dance halls hosted live bands and family fun, but were supplanted by home televisions by 1948. Other Western dance venue preferences likewise came and went. Ballrooms gained popularity in 1934 in Tulsa Oklahoma and ended in 1952 with the closure of Bert Phillips' SoCal Barn Dances. Honky Tonks combined barroom dance with (lots of) drinking, and saw their heyday from 1944 to 1980, ultimately finished by new anti-alcoholism organizations like MADD. Big Boxes were very large dance halls that could house well over a thousand participants, and were popular from 1971 until 1999, when the Cowboy Boogie in Anaheim California changed its format.

The "Dancing West" era began in 1937, and evolved alongside the changes in venues. Square Dancing started in 1937 with the Lovett Hall in Dearborn Michigan, and was financed by Henry Ford as a "civilizing" influence on his workforce. Square Dancing ended in 1972 when Callerlab was founded, which standardized Square Dancing terms, timing, and styling. Western Dance started in 1941 with "Western Swing," but by 1958 it had morphed into West Coast Swing by Skippy Blair. Country Dance became popular in 1980 when the movie *Urban Cowboy* with John Travolta hit the screens. Popular Country Dance styles were line dancing, Cowboy Cha Cha, and Two-Step. The Country Dance Era ended in 1999 when the television show *Club Dance* was canceled. Country Western Dance began in 1994 and ended in 2009 when the UCWDC (United Country Western Dance Council) signed an agreement to take Country Western dancing to the Olympics.

Nowadays, Country Western Dancing has become more "Country" and less "Western." Live bands have diminished, to be replaced by DJs. Initially a social activity, Country Dancing is now a sport. Once a depiction based on reality, Country Dancing is now a *depiction based on a depiction*. The Old West is more of a shared myth than a real, tangible tradition. Nevertheless, the fact that each era died out is critical. McClure believes it is our responsibility to maintain the cycle of Western genres, so that future generations may enjoy the memory of the Old West, imperfect and idealized as it is. Even though the *Old West* is long gone, it provides the root to the branches of our social, literary, musical, apparel, and civic identity.

— Patrick Mulvey

Above: *Hat Night winners, from left to right: 1st-place finisher Abe Hoffman, with a squid on his head; in 3rd-place, Therese Melbar with a homespun knotted bonnet; and for 2nd-place, Gary Turner wearing a dead bobcat.* ***Right:*** *Chief Corral Jester Jim Macklin and new member Richard Collins.* ***Below Left:*** *Kaiser John Dillon mit einer 1916 Pickelhaube, und Private First Hippie Brian Dillon with his grandpa's 1917 tin hat.* ***Below Right:*** *Two hats compel their human hosts to shake hands. Photos by Patrick Mulvey and Jim Macklin.*

Deciphering the "Knothead"

Therese Melbar

Knothead. Noun: a dull-witted blunderer; dumbbell, simpleton.
Merriam-Webster Dictionary

This hat is dedicated to my dear mother, who often called me "Knothead," when I so frequently upset her when I was a child. From the front to back, the knots I used on this sampler have the following unique histories, uses, and meanings:

1. ***Triple Overhand Knot*** (various colors): A technique that must be learnt by all who tie knots, is tying multiple overhand knots, also known as blood knots (form their past use by surgeons) or barrel knots (because of their shape).
2. ***Ashley's Stopper Knot*** (yellow): Devised by Clifford W. Ashley prior to 1910. Use this chunky hole blocker when the figure eight knot is too small.
3. ***Waterman's Knot*** (white): A strong and secure bend to join two similar ropes. The true lover's knot.
4. ***Monkey's Fist Knot*** (red): First illustrated in 1889 by E. N. Little in Log Book Notes. This is the classic knot to tie in the leading end of a heaving line, adding weight to improve its flight and distance through the air. "Three turns made north-south are surrounded by three more around their equator, with three more locking turns at 90 degrees."
5. ***Ashley's Stopper Knot*** (yellow): See item #2.
6. ***Waterman's Knot*** (white): See item #3.
7. ***Three-way Sheet Bend*** (white, orange, blue): The sheet bend was probably known by Neolithic people; remains of Stone Age nets have been found with mesh knots resembling sheet bends.
8. ***Bowline Knot*** (light chartreuse): A knot that makes a fixed loop. Used for a wide range of jobs. If excessively loaded can capsize, and can shake itself apart when unloaded.

Knots on both sides of the hat:

9. ***Overhand Knot with draw-loop*** (green & pink, or chartreuse & red): To be used when tying something bulkier, and overhand knot in the bight. This can also be used to prevent jib leads, main halyards, flag halyards from coming unreeled from slots or holes.
10. ***Figure Eight Coil*** (blue): Used for drying wet rope kink-free.

Excerpted from: *The Complete Book of Knots*, by Geoffrey Budworth. The Lyons Press, 1997. ISBN 1-55821-632-4.

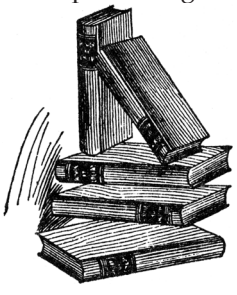
Down the Western Book Trail . . .

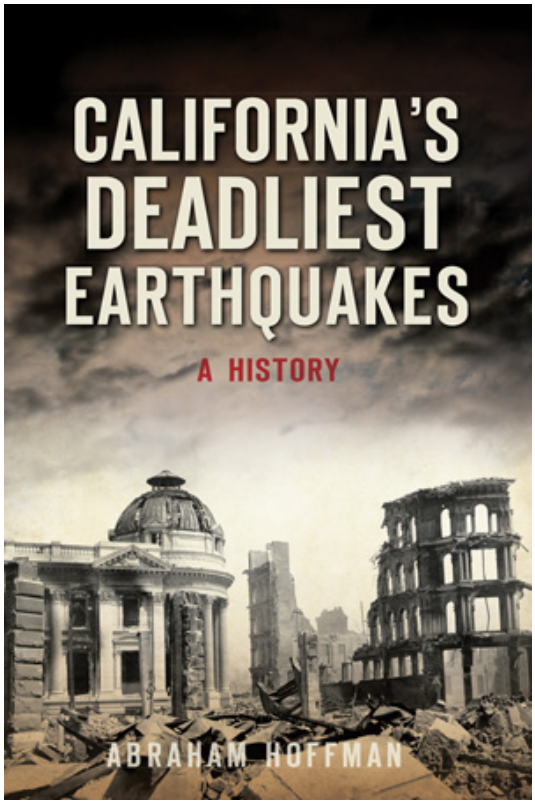
CALIFORNIA'S DEADLIEST EARTHQUAKES: A History, by Abraham Hoffman, The History Press, Charleston, SC, 2017, 171 pages, illustrations, bibliography + author's bio, note, soft cover, $21.99.

Pre-eminent Southern California historian and Los Angeles Corral Living Legend Abraham Hoffman scores an "A+" with his book, *California's Deadliest Earthquakes.* A scholarly review of ten major Golden State quakes between 1857 and 1994, each of these "top ten" temblors is given its own chapter. The book also includes two introductory sections on the nature of earthquakes grounded on scientific seismology. There is also a review of proto- and early historic earthquakes before 1857, that lack enough documentation to merit individual chapters themselves.

There is something new in Hoffman's book for everyone, even the most jaded earthquake aficionado, survivor, or survivor's descendant. His profusely-illustrated chapter on the 1872 Lone Pine Quake alone is worth the volume's reasonable purchase price. Anecdotal in the best sense of the word, each of the ten earthquakes selected is explored through eyewitness accounts, many of which appear for the very first time.

Many westerners believe that California earthquakes are not *all* bad. Our own *terremotos,* much more "laid back" than Central American "killer quakes," nevertheless still frighten visitors from the Atlantic Seaboard. Californians take great joy in telling Eastern rubes that "fire season" is followed by "earthquake season" every year. We do this because the unreasonable fear on the part of Eastern "earthquake virgins" is a useful



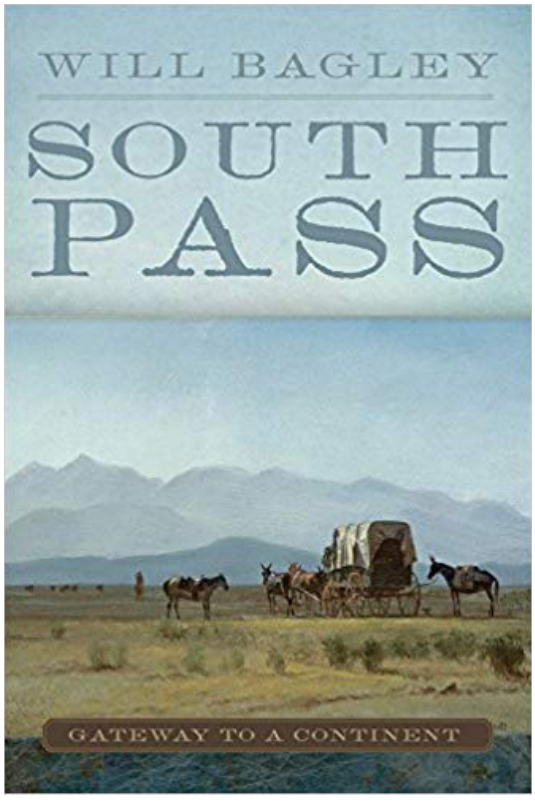


hedge against overpopulation and urbanization. Indeed, as my grandfather (1869-1938) who dynamited post-earthquake San Francisco as a fire-fighting measure in 1906 (pages 52-54 in *Deadliest Quakes*) used to say: *there is nothing wrong with California that a rise in ocean level cannot cure.*

Abe Hoffman's outstanding and very readable book reassures us that runaway development and exploding urbanism will continue to be mitigated by Mother Nature every time she deals us the earthquake card, as she already has so many times in the past. Every patriotic Californian should buy not one, but two copies of *California's Deadliest Earthquakes,* the first for a place of honor on his or her own bookshelf, the second to present to the first Easterner encountered who might be contemplating a move to our ever more crowded, rockin' and rollin,' shaking and quaking Golden State.

— Brian Dervin Dillon

SOUTH PASS: Gateway to a Continent, by Will Bagley. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014. 325 pp. Maps, Illustrations, Notes, Selected Bibliography, Index. Hardbound, $29.95.



An iconic location in the first six decades of the 19th century, South Pass marked the separation on the Continental Divide between East and West. Anyone traveling on the Oregon/Overland Trail had to cross South Pass on the way to what is today Washington, Oregon, California, Utah, and Nevada. Its strategic location made it possible for half a million people who, with various motivations, sought opportunity and a better life in the West, and were willing to endure the hardships on the journey.

Will Bagley tells the story of these pioneers with frequent excerpts from diaries, letters, and reminiscences. The reader thus gets a first-hand account of the difficulties of heading West over South Pass—miscalculating supplies, breaking down of wagons, disease, injury, and Native accommodation and hostility. Bagley approaches his topic chronologically after an introductory chapter on the geographic importance of South Pass. The first white people to recognize its significance were fur trappers, followed soon after by missionaries, homesteaders seeking fertile farmland in the Oregon country, Mormons looking for a Zion beyond the reach of a hostile United States, and gold seekers.

South Pass provided a place for important episodes in American history. Bagley devotes chapters to the mountain men and the fur trade, the Mormon War of 1857, the handcart disaster, the Pony Express, and the gold rush that flourished briefly in the pass area in 1867. He traces the fortunes and misfortunes of notable people—Jedediah Smith, Marcus and Narcissa Whitman, Brigham Young, and others—but he also notes the importance of lesser known figures such as Frederick William Lander who promoted a cut-off named for him.

The completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 made South Pass largely, but not completely, obsolete as a route over the Rocky Mountains. People too poor to buy railroad tickets continued to head West in wagon trains. Union Pacific surveyors, however, found a route across the Rockies that was more feasible than South Pass. But its importance has not been forgotten.

The National Register of Historic Places listed South Pass as one of the first sites on its list. To visit South Pass is to see Independence Rock, Devil's Gate, Rocky Ridge, and other landmarks in the area. "For many, South Pass represents a national treasure," Bagley concludes. "We can either squander what makes it precious, or protect and defend the qualities that make it unique and a worthy legacy to bequeath to future generations" (p. 294).

— Abraham Hoffman