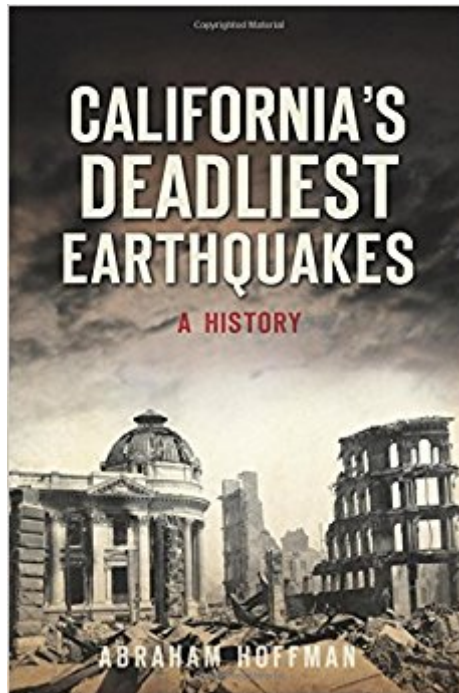




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California's Deadliest Earthquakes: A History



Synopsis

Home to hundreds of faults, California leads the nation in frequency of earthquakes every year. Despite enduring their share of the natural disasters, residents still speculate over the inevitable big one. More than three thousand people lost their lives during the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. Long Beach's 1933 earthquake caused a loss of nearly \$50 million in damages. And the Northridge earthquake injured thousands and left a \$550 million economic hit. Historian Abraham Hoffman explores the personal accounts and aftermath of California's most destructive tremors.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Abraham Hoffman earned his doctorate in history at UCLA and now teaches history at Los Angeles Valley College. He is a member of the Los Angeles City Historical Society, the Historical Society of Southern California, the Organization of American Historians, the Western History Association, the Western Writers of America and the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners.

In his excellent book, Prof. Hoffman reminds us this thin dirt crust we inhabit is far from stable. Not a technical book, the author provides published citizen accounts and personal interviews to depict California's largest earthquakes. These anecdotes and memories describing motion, intensity, damage and emotional reaction were easy to connect with my own. As a native Angeleno and now a Bay Area resident, I compared these descriptions to my own recollections of

experiencing the Tehachapi quake in 1952, the Napa quake in 2014 and countless other Northern California temblors and aftershocks. A technical book with seismographs and charts would have been wearisome, but Dr. Hoffman sustained my interest by using primary sources and period material that appeal to the reader with a non-professional background. The book has many photos from the past to illustrate the damage that words cannot describe. He also provides cautionary information that the public tends to disregard because we distance ourselves from unpleasant events over time. I enjoyed this book, but as a Californian, will not enjoy any subsequent editions that include chapters on "The Big One." If you live here, you perfectly understand.

California is commonly known as "earthquake country". There is good reason for this. The state sits atop an immense spider web of geologic faults and stress fractures not generally found in other states. Although we have had many quakes, most are not seriously damaging. Dr. Hoffman has pulled together a fine collection of the history and human interest stories of the major quakes to hit California since the days of recorded history. This is not a scientific treatise. It tells the story of these important events and the aftermath on ordinary people very well. An excellent book which all Californians should read.

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