

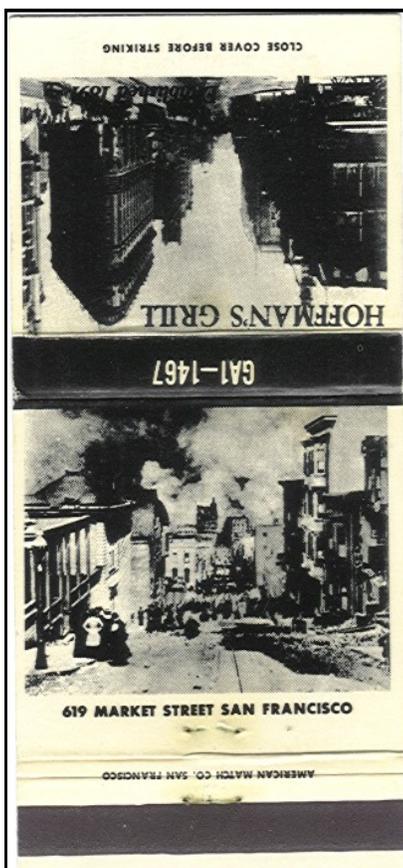
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Earthquake and Fire San Francisco in Ruins

by
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[This year is the 100th anniversary of the great San Francisco earthquake and fire—5:13 am, April 18, 1906. The following is from the front page of the combined "CALL-CHRONICLE-EXAMINER," published on the presses of the "Oakland Herald" and distributed, free, in San Francisco on April 19, 1906. This newspaper was one of the most-desired souvenirs of the disaster, and reprints are still available at the Museum of the City of San Francisco.]

“Death and destruction have been the fate of San Francisco. Shaken by a temblor at 5:13 o’clock yesterday morning, the shock lasting 48 seconds, and scourged by flames that raged diametrically in all directions, the city is a mass of smouldering ruins. At six o’clock last evening the flames seemingly playing with increased vigor,



threatened to destroy such sections as their fury had spared during the earlier portion of the day. Building their path in a triangular circuit from the start in the early morning, they jockeyed as the day waned, left the business section, which they had entirely devastated, and skipped in a dozen directions to the residence portions. As night fell they had made their way over into the North Beach section and springing anew to the south they reached out along the shipping section down the bay shore, over the hills and across toward Third and Townsend streets.

Warehouses, wholesale houses and manufacturing concerns fell in their path. This completed the destruction of the entire district known as the "South of Market Street." How far they are reaching to the south across the channel cannot be told as this part of the city is shut off from San Francisco papers. After darkness, thousands of the homeless were making their way with their blankets and scant provisions to Golden Gate Park and the beach to find shelter. Those in the homes on the hills just north of the Hayes Valley wrecked section piled their belongings in the streets and express wagons and automobiles were hauling the things away to the sparsely settled sections. Everybody in San Francisco is prepared to leave the city, for the belief is firm that San Francisco will be totally destroyed.

Downtown everything is ruin. Not a business house stands. Theaters are crumbled into heaps. Factories and commission houses lie smouldering on their former sites. All of the newspaper plants have been rendered useless, the "Call" and the "Examiner" buildings, excluding the "Call's" editorial rooms on Stevenson Street, being entirely destroyed. It is estimated that the loss in San Francisco will reach from \$150,000,000 to \$200,000,000. These figures are in the rough and nothing can be told until partial accounting is taken.

On every side there was death and suffering yesterday. Hundreds were injured, either burned, crushed or struck by falling pieces from the buildings, and one died while on the operating table at Mechanics' Pavilion, improvised as a hospital for the comfort and care of 300 of the injured. The number of dead is not known but it is estimated that at least 500 met their death in the horror.

At nine o'clock, under a special message from President Roosevelt, the city was placed under martial law. Hundreds of troops patrolled the streets and drove the crowds back, while hundreds more were set at work assisting the fire and police departments. The strictest orders were issued, and in true military spirit the soldiers obeyed. During the afternoon three thieves met their death by rifle bullets while at work in the ruins. The curious were driven back at the breasts of the horses that the cavalymen rode and all the crowds were forced from the level district to the hilly section beyond to the north.

The water supply was entirely cut off, and may be it was just as well, for the lines of fire department would have been absolutely useless at any stage. Assistant Chief Dougherty supervised the work of his men and early in the morning it was seen that the only possible chance to save the city lay in effort to check the flames by use of dynamite. During the day a blast could be heard in any section at intervals of only a few minutes, and buildings not destroyed by fire were blown to atoms. But though the gaps made the flames jump and although the failures of the heroic efforts of the police firemen and soldiers were at times sickening, the work was continued with a desperation that will live as one of the features of the terrible disaster. Men worked like fiends to combat the laughing, roaring, onrushing fire demon."

