

0. A SHOCKING QUAKE - Story Preface

1. STORY PREFACE

2. INSIDE THE EARTH

3. MOVING TECTONIC PLATES

4. EARTHQUAKES

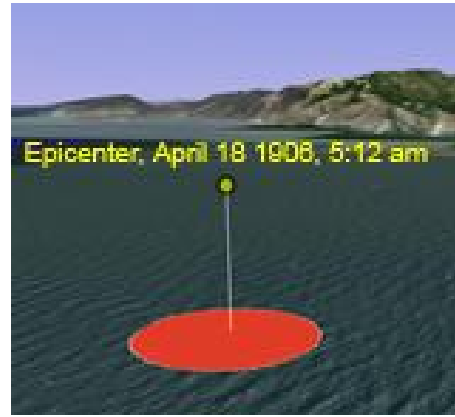
5. A SHOCKING QUAKE

6. THE CITY IN RUINS

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This image, from the U.S. Geological Survey, depicts the epicenter location of the Great San Francisco Earthquake of 1906. It was approximately 2 miles offshore, in the Pacific Ocean. PD

At 5:12 a.m., on April 18, 1906, San Francisco was rocked by an 8.3 magnitude earthquake. (So massive, the quake's effects were noted 9,100 miles away in Gottingen, Germany.) It ruptured 477 kilometers of the San Andreas Fault, which was not yet known by that name.

People were shocked by the totally unexpected event. (As far as anyone knew, the country had never previously sustained such a massive earthquake, although San Francisco had sustained many prior quakes.) Eyewitness accounts (like this one from Emma M. Burke, who lived near Golden Gate Park) tell the story best:

The shock came, and hurled my bed against an opposite wall. I sprang up, and, holding firmly to the foot-board managed to keep on my feet to the door. The shock was constantly growing heavier; rumbles, crackling noises, and falling objects already commenced the din.

The door refused to open. The earthquake had wedged it in the door-frame. My husband was pushing on the opposite side and I pulled with all my strength, when a twist of the building released it, and the door sprang open.

We braced ourselves in the doorway, clinging to the casing, Our son appeared across the reception room, and my husband motioned to him to stand in his door also, for fear of the chimney.

It grew constantly worse, the noise deafening; the crash of dishes, falling pictures, the rattle of the flat tin roof, bookcases being overturned, the piano hurled across the parlor, the groaning and straining of the building itself, broken glass and falling plaster, made such a roar that no one noise could be distinguished.

Minutes seemed like hours as the earth kept shaking:

Stand in front of your clock and count off forty-eight seconds, and imagine this scene to have continued for that length of time, and you can get some idea of what one could suffer during that period.

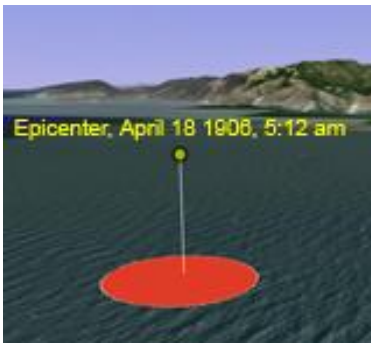
How did the city appear after nearly a minute of shaking?

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/A-SHOCKING-QUAKE-San-Francisco-Earthquake-of-1906)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/A-SHOCKING-QUAKE-San-Francisco-Earthquake-of-1906>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/A-SHOCKING-QUAKE-San-Francisco-Earthquake-of-1906)

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Epicenter of 1906 San Francisco Earthquake

Image online, courtesy USGS. PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Epicenter-of-1906-San-Francisco-Earthquake>



San Andreas Fault - Proximity to San Francisco

Image, described above, online courtesy USGS. PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/San-Andreas-Fault-Proximity-to-San-Francisco>



Golden Gate Park - 1892

Online, courtesy MOAC (Museums & The Online Archive of California). PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Golden-Gate-Park-1892>