

0. AN EYEWITNESS REMEMBERS - Story Preface

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About 4,000 soldiers helped the people of San Francisco to cope after the quake and fire devastated their town in April of 1906. This image depicts assisting soldiers. Image online, courtesy U.S. Army. PD

After the trembling ended, people ventured outside. Lloyd Head, a member of Roosevelt Boys' Club, later wrote of the rumors he heard and the damage he saw:

People lined the sidewalks and everything was confusion. Looking up the street we could see where a large plate glass window had been broken in a store at the corner and when we looked away down town to see where the City Hall was you could see right through it. A fire was blazing further down town and rumors were spread around that the Cliff House had fallen into the water and that certain cities along the coast were under water.

These were not the days of instant communication. The city had very few cars to assist where horses were afraid to go. Confusion, at least for a time, added to despair. Lloyd's account continues:

Nobody knew what to do and everybody seemed rattled. The fire was rapidly increasing and at intervals slight earthquakes would cause small sized panics. People would rush to the middle of the street between the [street] car tracks and stay there quite a while after the shock had passed away. . My mother then went after some stuff to eat so that we wouldn't be without something if we had to go up to the hills to get away from the fire. By the time it was gaining headway and cinders from the fire came floating down on us until there was a thin layer of them all over the yard.

As soldiers helped the stricken residents, people left their ruined or damaged homes for the relative safety of San Francisco's hills:

The sun shone blood-red through a thick haze of smoke and people began coming in a steady steam from the district near the fire. Some carried all they had save in little carts or wagons which had before been only playthings. Hatless, coatless, mothers and fathers, with children all packing something trudged on in the direction of the hills. . There was no water and the noise of buildings being blown up continually startled us.

Let's examine archive pictures of the people and their devastated city.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/AN-EYEWITNESS-REMEMBERS-San-Francisco-Earthquake-of-1906>

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Media Stream



San Francisco Quake of 1906 - Soldiers Help

Image online, courtesy U.S. Army history archives.

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