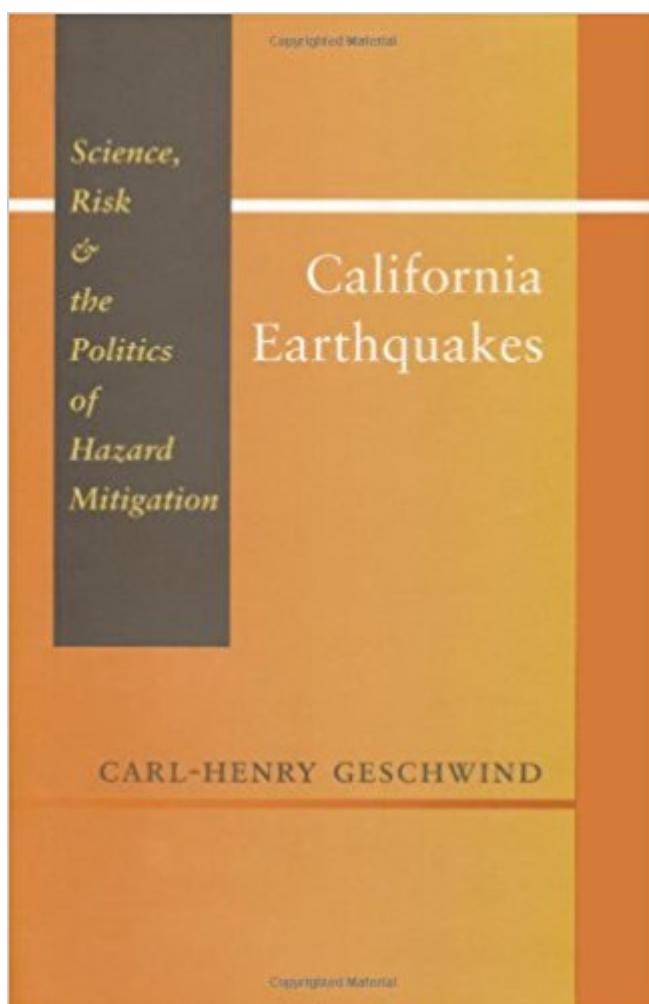


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# California Earthquakes: Science, Risk, And The Politics Of Hazard Mitigation (Creating The North American Landscape)



## Synopsis

In 1906, after an earthquake wiped out much of San Francisco, leading California officials and scientists described the disaster as a one-time occurrence and assured the public that it had nothing to worry about. California Earthquakes explains how, over time, this attitude changed, and Californians came to accept earthquakes as a significant threat, as well as to understand how science and technology could reduce this threat. Carl-Henry Geschwind tells the story of the small group of scientists and engineers who, in tension with real estate speculators and other pro-growth forces, private and public, developed the scientific and political infrastructure necessary to implement greater earthquake awareness. Through their political connections, these reformers succeeded in building a state apparatus in which regulators could work together with scientists and engineers to reduce earthquake hazards. Geschwind details the conflicts among scientists and engineers about how best to reduce these risks, and he outlines the dramatic twentieth-century advances in our understanding of earthquakes—their causes and how we can try to prepare for them. Tracing the history of seismology and the rise of the regulatory state and of environmental awareness, California Earthquakes tells how earthquake-hazard management came about, why some groups assisted and others fought it, and how scientists and engineers helped shape it.

## Book Information

Series: Creating the North American Landscape

Hardcover: 352 pages

Publisher: Johns Hopkins University Press; 1st printing edition (April 19, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0801865964

ISBN-13: 978-0801865961

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

Best Sellers Rank: #836,950 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #46 in Books > Science & Math > Earth Sciences > Geology > Volcanology #144 in Books > Science & Math > Earth Sciences > Seismology #194 in Books > Science & Math > Earth Sciences > Earthquakes & Volcanoes

## Customer Reviews

"California Earthquakes is a provocative and accessible history of science, technology, and politics in a particular natural environment." (Environmental History)"Highly recommended to a wide variety

of readers. In a broader sense than its earthquake theme, it is an absorbing account of an important component of the development of California. Geschwind writes with an attractive style, some humor, and knows how to thread intriguing anecdotes." (Earth Sciences History)"Geschwind, like no other, tells the story of a full spectrum of human responses to earthquakes in California. Topics are seamlessly interwoven in historical context... Dealing constructively with California earthquakes in the future should be enhanced through the understanding and appreciation of the historical aspects so well presented in this book." (Choice)"This carefully researched book provides new knowledge about a group of scientific experts who are not normally associated with Progressivism. In the process of examining the history of this group of technocratic reformers, Geschwind persuasively shows how the regulatory state has come to play the single greatest role in insulating Californians from the risk of seismic disaster." (Journal of American History)"[A] thorough and well-documented study... This book is an important benchmark for understanding the historical context of [the scientific community's] work, and provides insights into how scientific policy and funding programs are formed." (Western Historical Quarterly)"Well written, tightly structured, and carefully researched." (Contemporary Disaster Review)" California Earthquakes is an interesting, informative book about the evolution of public policy toward earthquake hazards. I recommend this book to seismologists, scientific historians, earthquake engineers, and the growing community of readers interested in general issues of disaster mitigation." (Seth Stein, Northwestern University)

Winner, Book Prize, Forum for the History of Science in America, History of Science SocietyTracing the history of seismology and the rise of the regulatory state and of environmental awareness, California Earthquakes tells how earthquake-hazard management came about, why some groups assisted and others fought it, and how scientists and engineers helped shape it. "This carefully researched book provides new knowledge about a group of scientific experts who are not normally associated with Progressivism. In the process of examining the history of this group of technocratic reformers, Geschwind persuasively shows how the regulatory state has come to play the single greatest role in insulating Californians from the risk of seismic disaster." • Journal of American History" California Earthquakes is a provocative and accessible history of science, technology, and politics in a particular natural environment." • Environmental History"Geschwind, like no other, tells the story of a full spectrum of human responses to earthquakes in California. Topics are seamlessly interwoven in historical context... Dealing constructively with California earthquakes in the future should be enhanced through the understanding and appreciation of the historical aspects so well presented in this book." • Choice"[A] thorough and well-documented study... This book is an

important benchmark for understanding the historical context of [the scientific community's] work, and provides insights into how scientific policy and funding programs are formed."• Western Historical Quarterly" In a broader sense than its earthquake theme, it is an absorbing account of an important component of the development of California. Geschwind writes with an attractive style, some humor, and knows how to thread intriguing anecdotes."• Earth Sciences History" Well written, tightly structured, and carefully researched."• Contemporary Disaster Review Carl-Henry Geschwind holds a master's degree in geological sciences from Brown University and a Ph.D. in history of science from the Johns Hopkins University.

This is a must read for every structural engineer and code official in California. Very well written and easy to read and has one of the most complete annotated bibliographies that I have ever seen. This would be a great companion text to an earthquake engineering or engineering geology course.

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