Calamity, Catastrophe, and Horror:
Representation of Natural Disaster, 1885-2005

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CALAMITY, CATASTROPHE AND HORROR: REPRESENTATION OF NATURAL DISASTER, 1885-2005

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1. INTRODUCTION

When Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans and vicinity in 2005, it deservedly became one of the media events of the decade. Yet in spite of the blanket coverage of the disaster, much of the early reporting reflected (and ultimately reinforced) existing stereotypes, rather than providing a factual account. Reporters, who were often unable to see the events for themselves, relied on rumor and hearsay; many widely circulated stories were later discredited. Indeed, while academic scholarship on disaster response has become increasingly complex, popular discourse seemed to return to the historical rhetoric of “calamity,” “catastrophe,” and “horror.”

In attempting to interpret how and why this happened, we found it valuable to return to an earlier age of disaster reports, many of which used similar language, describing natural disasters in terms of catastrophes that led to lawlessness, panic, and the kind of social disorder that required military intervention. Through a comparison over time, we hope to shed light both on the persistence of entrenched cultural attitudes to disasters, as well as on how some of those attitudes can be challenged. The practical value of such analyses is that they offer insight to disaster response planners, who often find it difficult to understand why both individuals and the media do not always respond in what planners define as a “rational” manner.

2. METHODS

By way of a pilot comparative exercise, we turned to a selection of publications, dating from 1885 to 1931, pertaining to natural disaster events and geography. Most were trade books offering semi-popular accounts of natural disasters. A formal content analysis was not attempted; rather we looked for themes that appeared in the texts, especially in terms of how they framed perception and risk, emergency response, recovery and vulnerability, with particular reference to issues of race and ethnicity. The selection was opportunistic rather than systematic, representing those publications in the authors’ private collections. If this research were to be extended, it would be important to conduct a more systematic analysis, and to include journalistic accounts from the period. The focus of the analysis is not on whether the accounts are factual, but on the way they are linguistically framed. Some of the guiding questions included: How did people account for or explain natural disasters? How did the texts
explain response to the events? And how did prevailing attitudes toward race and ethnicity affect the way natural disasters were framed? Thus, we offer, not a scientific sample, but a snapshot of times and places, that include the 1889 Johnstown flood; the 1900 Galveston hurricane; the 1902 volcanic eruption on Martinique and St. Vincent: the 1906 San Francisco earthquake; the 1913 Ohio, Indiana, Nebraska and Mississippi Valley tornadoes and floods, and the 1927 Mississippi River floods. We then use the popular representations of Hurricane Katrina, extracted largely from commentary on that representation, to draw comparisons over time, showing how common themes persist, often in spite of considerable advances in academic understanding of natural disaster.

3. PERCEPTION, AWARENESS AND RISK

One enduring feature of natural hazards is the differential yet evolving perceptions of risk and how this might affect individual and group behavior. Rational behavior is not always evident in disaster scenarios due to a variety of situational and cognitive influences, including socio-economic, cultural, political, and psychological factors, which constrain individual perception and judgment. These same factors apply as much today as in the past, and yet disasters often remain vague, menacing threats. Thus Johnson (1889) quoted an inhabitant of Johnstown after the flood of 1889, which killed 2,209 people, regarding changing awareness,

We were afraid of that lake seven years ago...people wondered, and asked why the dam was not strengthened, as it certainly had become weak; but nothing was done, and by and by they talked less and less about it, as nothing happened, though now and then some would shake their heads as if conscious the fearful day would come some time when their worst fears would be transcended by the horror of the actual occurrence (p. 34-35).

At the same time, a theme that emerged even in the early reports is that experts knew of the threat, but failed to act (a theme that became prominent of course in 2005). Banks (1906), in reference to the 1906 San Francisco earthquake stated,

The fate that befell San Francisco had long been expected by scientists. The city’s location was more dangerous than that of any other large city in the United States and often had its destruction by earthquake been predicted. But the warnings of geologists and of nature were alike unheeded by the devoted city. Its people went on erecting palatial buildings and beautiful residences, growing happier, more prosperous and more gay year by year, ever trusting that their glorious city would be spared serious damage in the future as it had been in the past (p. 186).

This situation is common. Barry (1998) indicated that reports of Mississippi floods date to the 1543 exploration of Hernando De Soto. Since then, cities have been established along rivers and coastlines to accommodate trade and transportation. The commercial benefits outweighed the infrequent incidence of earthquake, hurricane, and flood, and threat of natural hazards was not given great weight at a time of continuing economic expansion. In addition, the lack of sophisticated understanding of hazard etiology in late 19th and early 20th centuries undoubtedly contributed to fatalism, probabilistic perceptions and beliefs in the capricious forces of nature or the mysterious mind of God. For instance, Everett (1913, 21), describing the Midwestern floods and tornados of 1913, wrote, “Nature shows that men are pigmies” adding, “What forces decided that the tornado should hit the earth at Omaha, one of the proudest cities of the nation, cannot be known by men, but just at the city’s borders the winds came down and ripped a path through the thickly inhabited portion, taking rich and poor before its relentless fury (p. 18).

Similarly, Marshall (1913, 13), in addressing the 1913 Dayton flood, reported, “Science has its limitations. Only the Infinite is the master of these forces. Theologians who attempt to solve the mysteries of Providence have found in such occasions the evidence of Divine wrath and warning to the smitten people.” Clearly, this is a deistic interpretation of disaster.
Much more is known today about both causes of disasters and appropriate mitigation strategies, and the general public can expect more scientific information. Nevertheless, Hurricane Katrina demonstrated the potency and persistence of older notions of causality. Dhar and Roy (2004), describe the variety of religious interpretations of the 2004 tsunami, while after Hurricane Katrina, there were reports of multiple groups seeing God’s hand in the disaster. Indeed, the overall reporting of the hurricane was couched in language rich in apocalyptic imagery. The web-site Global Language Monitor, which analyses language of media coverage, reported that the most common terms used to characterize Katrina, while led by the relatively neutral “disaster,” included “biblical” (as in “biblical devastation”); “catastrophe;” “holocaust;” and “apocalypse.” For example, The Times (London, September 3) began: “America comes to an end in Montgomery, Alabama. For the next 265 miles to the Gulf Coast, it has been replaced by a dangerous and paranoid post-apocalyptic landscape…” (www.languagemonitor.com). Reuters (2005) reported that “some fundamentalists said the hurricane was sent to punish New Orleans, a city known for Mardi Gras and other raucous festivals,” adding, “others said the disaster, which may have killed thousands … , was revenge for the United States' support of the removal of Jewish settlers in the Gaza Strip.” A Philadelphia group called Repent America claimed that God sent the hurricane to prevent a planned gay pride festival; the group’s director was quoted: "May this act of God cause us all to think about what we tolerate in our city limits (Reuters 2005). Evangelist Franklin Graham attributed the disaster to the fact that “We have taken God out of our schools and God out of our society. We don't have a moral standard.” Finally Illinois Democratic congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr., was less specific: "God is responsible for this and in his own time he will reveal why" (Reuters 2005).

Drinker (1918) seemed to anticipate the frustration that many scientists feel today— that even though most people objectively understand that disasters result from natural (or human) causes and not from divine intervention, entrenched beliefs are hard to dislodge:

*In the presence of such a fearful disaster there are few persons who will say, but there are some who will think, that this is in some manner a visitation decreed upon the communities which suffer. The very magnitude and superhuman force of it will suggest to many minds the thought of an ordered punishment and warning for offenses against a higher power. Such a concept, happily more rarely held now than in earlier times, is, of course, revolting to sober judgment and to the instincts of religious reverence. ... This was no vengeance decreed for human shortcomings. It was superhuman, but not supernatural. It was but a manifestation of the unchangeable, irresistible forces of nature, governed by physical laws which are inexorable (Intro).*

### 4. MITIGATION AND RECOVERY

Mitigation of disasters has evolved over the years from attempts to control of nature to one of planning and incorporating behavioral and non-structural adjustments (Tobin and Montz 1997). The control and subdue approach to disaster recovery was prevalent during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, emphasizing rebuilding and the use of technology to avert future disaster. Drinker (1918, 191) wrote that “West side citizens of Columbus determined that the district should be built up again and have already begun work to that end. They demanded that the city widen straighten and deepen the river channel and construct big levees to make impossible another disaster.” Two days after the San Francisco earthquake, the United States Congress took steps to repair or replace all of the public buildings damaged or destroyed in the city (Morris, 1906). Halstead (1900, 226) in reference to the Galveston hurricane of 1900 stated that “H.H. Belo, publisher of the Galveston News, said that Galveston will be rebuilt at once, and that the new buildings will be stronger than those which were swept away by the disaster.”

Such attitudes led directly to the “technological fix” of natural hazards. In a review of the 1913 Ohio River valley disaster, Drinker (1918, 292) suggested that flood damage initiated
congressional action on flood prevention as proposed in the Progressive, Republican, and Democratic platforms and proposals for levees, reservoirs and other public works were rapidly developed. General W.H. Bixby, chief of engineers of the United States Army, argued, “The most feasible and reasonable plan to prevent such floods as we are now having is the deepening, widening and straightening [sic] the rivers, especially the widening of these streams. It is easier to prevent floods than to remedy their consequences.” In response to the Midwestern floods of 1913, Philip R. Kellar, secretary of the executive committee of the National Drainage congress stated, “Loss of lives and destruction of property by floods can be prevented by the national government cooperating with the states. There is no question...of the ability of the nation and the states to devise a method by which the crest of such floods may be removed and the water confined to the flood channels. This is an engineering problem which can be solved, though it may take millions of dollars” (Everett, 1913, 232).

However, gradually emerging during this period is a reticence regarding dependence on such technological interventions as the recognition for potential technological failure grows. Simpich (1927) referred to the failure of levees in reference to the Mississippi flood of 1927;

In heat, mud, and miasma, slaving men and sweating animals, toiling through the years, have thrown up 2,500 miles of huge fort-like levees. Higher and higher they build them, hoping always that some day, somehow, they may achieve perfect flood control. But hydraulic principles are stubborn. They will not compromise with man’s puny plans. The levees, as built, have turned once vast, empty swamps into rich, thickly inhabited areas and added hugely to our national wealth. Five years out of six they may hold; to that extent they may be successful; but when the river rises high enough it breaks them (p. 243).

It is apparent, then, that many early writers recognized what we now refer to as the levee effect whereby mitigation initiatives can promote a false sense of security thus encouraging further development in hazardous environments which ultimately culminates in catastrophic losses when design standards are exceeded (Tobin 1995).

Attempts to return to pre-existing conditions are also increasingly questioned, as later seen in New Orleans. There is, for example, evidence of the realization that some disaster-prone locations should perhaps be abandoned. Garesche (1902, 175) quoted Admiral Servan of the French flagship Tage after the Mt. Pelee eruption of 1902 that devastated the economic capital of St. Pierre and killed an estimated 30,000 people, “The City of St. Pierre must never be rebuilt. While communities have indeed relocated after disaster, for many this is just not viable, whether because of space limitations, land tenure concerns or even geographical attachment to place. These questions have become crucial in the debate about reconstruction in New Orleans, complicated by issues of race and ethnicity, as we shall see.

5. SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

Any study of disasters must address contextual conditions of society, notably social and economic vulnerability (Wisner et al., 2004). Invariably, the poor, particular ethnic groups, and women suffer greater impacts from disasters, because they have limited access to resources and constrained choices. When disaster strikes, it is not uncommon that the more privileged may then deem the marginalized as undeserving of relief aid, perhaps because they did not respond quickly or rationally by more affluent standards. Tierney et al. (2006) argued that a long-established “disaster myth” is that the poor and other undesirable people will inevitably precipitate riots, panic, and widespread lawlessness, even though the hazards literature clearly indicates that natural disasters more typically produce pro-social and cooperative responses at all levels of society. Indeed, research indicates that community response after disasters brings decreased conflict and a convergence of social values within a community that overrides pre-
disaster differences as members focus their energies on the problem at hand (Tobin and Montz, 1997).

The theme of cooperation crossing economic and social barriers does appear in the early texts, although as we shall see, it is overshadowed by more negative descriptions. Garesche (1902, 7) referencing the destruction of St. Pierre after the volcanic eruption of Mt. Pelee, writes “Calamity proves the kinship of the world. In the presence of disaster differences are lost sight of, enmity ceases, and the great heart of all mankind throbs in sympathy with the afflicted ones.” Similarly, Morris (1906), writing of the first few days after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, tells us that, “Rich and poor were mingled together, the delicately reared with the rough sons of toil to whom privation was no new experience. Johnson (1927, iv), in recording the response to the Vermont floods of 1927, spoke proudly of the “wonderful courage, fortitude and faith demonstrated everywhere by the men and women of Vermont.”

Similarly, there are accounts that recognize social disparities, and conflicts and yet evoke sympathy for the underprivileged. As Everett (1913, 85) wrote, “Governor Cox stated, ‘The crowded north side of the river, where there may be thousands of foreigners dead and dying, lay far beyond reach. No one speaks of it, the immediate needs of the known survivors calling for every attention.” Barry (1998, 320) cited a letter from a black Republican activist at the time of the 1927 Mississippi floods, “It is said that many relief boats have hauled whites only, have gone to imperilled [sic] districts and taken all whites out and left the Negroes; it is also said that planters in some instances hold their labor at the point of a gun for fear they would get away and not return. In other instances, it is said that mules have been given preference on boats to Negroes.” Du Bois (1928, 5) echoed this, “In the white camps transportation on the river boats was issued to individual refugees at their request.” Blacks were only allowed to leave when owners of the land on which they share-cropped requested their return. At that point they were forced to return to the plantation despite Mississippi law which cancelled all tenant indebtedness during time of flood disaster. Simpich, (1927, 265) wrote that “On the levees, fighting now to save their homes and their lives, white men and negroes work side by side.” Yet Du Bois (1928, 7) showed that, “The work on the Vicksburg levee was entirely the enforced labor of Negro refugees, superintended by armed guardsmen. This was done by order of General Green, the labor to be brought from the colored refugee camps.”

However, while we see inklings of social consciousness in the early accounts, the more general depiction of “others” reflects suspicion and hostility. After the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, officials recommended that Chinatown, in which 45,000 Chinese lived, should not be rebuilt in the same place (Banks and Read, 1906). Essentially, the fire gave an opportunity to disperse or replace the Chinese in the same way that commentators have pointed to suspicion that the Hurricane Katrina disaster would disperse concentrations of Lower Ninth Ward African-Americans to make way for “a glitzy Cajun Casino land” (Boehm, 2006). Tyler (1906, 311-312) described how during the earthquake and fire “Chinamen of the lower class…sat behind barred windows and guarded their poultry and smoked fish until they themselves were smoked to death,” a depiction that again presages the incredulity with which pundits greeted the news that many African-Americans died in their New Orleans homes rather than risk leaving. Morris, (1906, Ch V) reflected a general contempt for the ability of non-Americans to control themselves in the San Francisco disaster, noting; “Here on one side dwelt 10,000 Chinese, and on the other thousands of Italians, Spaniards and Mexicans, while close at hand lived the riff-raff of the ‘Barbary Coast’. Seemingly the whole of these rushed for that one square of open ground, the two streams meeting at the centre of the square and heaping up on its edges. There they squabbled and fought.” Myths, then persevere regarding the actions of “others.”

Many early accounts clearly emerge from a historical context, rooted in Spencer’s theories on Social Darwinism, in scientific attempts to define race as biological reality, and in the related environmental determinism movement of Semple (1911) and Huntington and Carlson (1931).
Peet (1985) described the prevailing cultural ethos of the time as social philosophy to legitimize western expansion and class disparity. Likewise, craniology and anthropometrics were employed to classify races on the basis of physical features (Gould, 1981). These were then correlated with varying mental capacities, inevitably placing Caucasians at the top of the hierarchy. Perhaps most egregious was Guyot (1885, 115) who stated that, “The white race, the normal, or typical race, is distinguished by perfect regularity of features, and harmony in all the proportions of the figure, securing agility and strength in the highest degree, with the utmost beauty and grace.” Evolutionary perspectives were used to demonstrate the inevitability of all society’s progression from savagery, through barbarism, to civilization; the destruction of those who resisted, such as Native Americans, was justified on the basis of “survival of the fittest.”

The impact of such context on disaster accounts and explanations has not been well-addressed, but it is significant in the texts used here. Historically, accounts of disasters fall back on the familiar images of “the other” as less-evolved, irrational, and animalistic, with criminal acts disproportionately attributed to “foreigners” and “negroes.” For instance, commenting on the Galveston hurricane, Green (1900), quoting from the Galveston News; Halstead (1900), citing “observers;” and Garesche (1902) all emphasized the nefarious actions of African-Americans.

One soldier at guard reported that he had been forced to shoot five negroes. They were in the act of taking jewelry from a dead woman’s body. The soldier ordered them to desist and placed them under arrest. One of the number whipped out a revolver and the soldier shot him. The others made for the soldier and he laid them out with four shots (Green, 1900, 164-165).

I saw a negro woman carrying a large basket of silver that was not hers .... ‘Upon all hands this horrible work is going on. The offenders are usually negroes. As soon as the storm subsided the negroes stole all the liquor they could get, and, beastly drunk, proceeded with their campaign of vandalism (Halstead, 1900, 176-177).

Tuesday night ninety negro looters were shot in their tracks by citizen guards. One of them was searched and $700 found, together with four diamond rings and two water soaked gold watches. The finger of a white woman with a gold band around it was clutched in his hands (Garesche, 1902, 414).

These texts are full of such anecdotes, producing a picture of marginalized groups as utterly despicable, showing no evidence of human compassion. Other disasters evoked parallel views. Marshall (1913, 90) revealed that after the 1913 Dayton flood, “Nine colored men and one white man were added to the seven suspected looters shot and killed since martial law was proclaimed.” Johnson (1889, 239), quoted a correspondent describing the 1889 Johnstown flood as saying, “Last night a party of thirteen Hungarians were noticed stealthily picking their way along the banks of the Conemaugh toward Sang Hollow. Suspicious of their purpose, several farmers armed themselves and started in pursuit. Soon their most horrible fears were realized. The Hungarians were out for plunder.”

Today, the social landscape has changed dramatically, stressing diversity and equality. In hazards, biological explanations of race and environmental determinism are outdated, and socio-cultural and economic vulnerability has been considered for decades (e.g. Wisner et al. 2004). Yet while scholarship has been transformed, popular discourse still harks to the past. Certainly, by 2005, media framing was less overtly racist, but the overall impact is remarkably comparable. As Entmann and Rojecki (2000, 1) pointed out, racism is more subtle today: “no longer based on biological views of race and the overt stereotypes and caricatures that grew out of them.” But as they go on to show in a detailed analysis of black images in all forms of media, from news to popular movies, our culture is still permeated with “prototypes” that “encode habitual ways of thinking that help people make sense of a complicated and uncertain
Media function to frame events in particular ways that then appear natural to both reporters and audiences. As defined by Entmann and Rojecki, “frames highlight and link data selectively to tell more or less coherent stories that define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies” (p. 49). For instance, a story may be framed as a “gangland shooting” when African-Americans are involved, but as an issue of personal revenge when whites are the culprits or victims. This framing appears to be at work in the evolving story of Hurricane Katrina.

Tierney et al. (2006) conducted a content analysis of reports in The New York Times, Washington Post, and New Orleans Times-Picayune, and they pointed to the way that well-worn disaster frames operated, especially in the early, chaotic days of the disaster. Quoting extensively from these accounts, they showed how the overall story was one of “chaos,” “looting,” and “mayhem,” with the New York Times reporting that “rapes and assaults were occurring unimpeded in the neighborhood streets” (p. 67). Horrific stories of rapes and murders occurring in the lawlessness of the New Orleans football stadium presented a picture of a city out of control. And while print accounts did not specify race in the way older accounts did, the overwhelming visual representation made it clear that black people were the cause of these problems (Faux and Kim 2006). Pundits speculated about why (black) people in vulnerable areas did not evacuate, while the more affluent quickly left the city. Instead of drawing the obvious conclusions that affluent people could afford cars, hotels, and other necessities for successful evacuation, the “rationality” of those who stayed was questioned. The more subtle, modern racism was apparent in widely quoted comments, such as that by former first lady Barbara Bush: “And so many of the people … you know, were underprivileged anyway, so this … is working very well for them.” (Editor and Publisher 2005). In a particularly infamous example, two photographs, one from Associated Press and the other from AFP Getty showed a young black man “looting,” and the other depicted a white couple “finding” food. In both pictures, the individuals were wading waist-deep in water, carrying supplies from nearby stores (Kinney 2005). Commentators have reported concerns regarding how the disaster would offer an opportunity to recreate the city, implicitly and explicitly suggesting that this would involve making it “less black” (Boehm, 2006, Lyderson, 2006)

The reports of mayhem and lawlessness were later shown to be largely false. It was significant that the looter/finder example was the subject of widespread public comment and much media self-flagellation, none of which would have happened in the past, when such frames went unquestioned. Some argued that the lessons learned in Katrina would actually serve to redefine public awareness of poverty and its relationship to vulnerability, although that promise has not been clearly realized.

Interestingly, Tierney et al. (2006) argued that the media frame used in Katrina was largely drawn from a recent frame developed in the post-911, Iraq war context, with the repeated description of New Orleans as a “war zone,” requiring military intervention. Again, citing advances in disaster research, they suggested that this frame is new, given what we know about the generally positive social response to natural disasters. Yet our look back to early disaster reports suggests that the media may actually have resorted to another “disaster myth” not dispelled by scholarly research. These early accounts often present a picture of lawlessness and anarchy, into which the arrival of a military presence is welcomed. For instance, Tyler (1906) reported on the death penalty for looting after the San Francisco earthquake, arguing that in spite of the constitutional issues raised, any sane person would see troops as a necessity:

Four thousand United States troops...have invaded California, and insofar as they have shot down fourteen citizens, have made war on the Commonwealth. They were rushed into the city by the commanding general without orders, in violation of every law which governs the States...And yet, they were hardly less welcome than the trains of foodstuffs, and the general who sent them will receive only commendation...These events at San
Francisco call attention once more to the limitations upon the most solemnly enacted law and prove that only one law is universally stable, the unwritten law of self-preservation and that other which places upon the shoulders of all, responsibility for all the great brotherhood of man (p. 234, 237).

When President George W. Bush decided to send in troops to New Orleans, it was on the premise that the situation was essentially out of control, and should be treated as a war zone. One of the results was that the military began exercising the kind of control over information that characterizes the war in Iraq. “In an effort to further contain media coverage…General Honore and Colonel Terry Ebbert announced that the media would have ‘zero access’ to the recovery operations” (Tierney et al., 2006, 73). From our discussion of earlier reports, it seems that the media frame of disaster as equivalent to war is not as novel as might be thought; 9-11 and the “war on terror” might have increased its visibility, but they probably did not create it.

6. CONCLUSION

Historical review often reveals the past as prologue to the future. To wit, the dependence on technology to provide structural remedies in high risk locations still persists. The individual affinity for place, either by choice or by necessity, remains a concern as increased settlement and development in hazardous areas continues. People’s tendency to seek meaning and explanation for natural disasters continues in the face of increased scientific knowledge. And while egalitarian concepts of social dignity and equality have gained a substantial foothold in 21st century society, the vulnerability of the poor, the aged, the sickly, and those marginalized by race or ethnicity has been clearly evident in recent disasters. Perhaps most significant, this comparative exercise shows us that those who write the stories of disaster, especially in the absence of clear information, often fall back on familiar frames, myths, and narrative conventions, as media researchers have suggested for many years (Bird and Dardenne 1997). This framing in turn exacerbates the situation, serving to confirm negative stereotypes in the minds of both the public and the policy-makers. As Swain (2005) wrote, “The aftermath of the New Orleans disaster threatens to disrupt the already fragile race relations in America for decades to come.” Improvements in vulnerability assessment, hazard communication, and structural mitigation have occurred over the past century, but policy-makers need to better understand that mediated representations of disaster, whether accurate or not, are crucial in shaping real action. Perhaps these lessons can be a wake up call to action by academics, not only to apply their knowledge to mitigate the causes and consequences of disasters, but also to help shape the stories that define an event in the public realm.

The last word, therefore, is left to one of the early writers, Frederick Drinker, to serve as inspiration for the continuation of geographic and anthropological research in natural disasters.

To the limited vision of man, with his brief life, nature seems incredibly cruel and wasteful. Her teachings must be learned at fearful cost. Men will ask themselves what lessons are taught by this overwhelming sacrifice. There is made plain, first, the immutability of natural laws and the utter powerlessness of man when he pits his strength against their full demonstration. It is revealed, again, that, there are forces which before all the might of human intellect remain unconquerable. ... Does not such an appalling event serve to awaken responsibility among the wealthy and powerful toward the poor and weak? When all goes well, when there are no thunderous warnings such as this of the helplessness of man against the forces arrayed against him, the fortunate do not realize that for millions mere existence is a poignant struggle; that hunger and cold and disease prevail even when there are no ghastly floods to make them vivid and picturesque. We do not doubt that there will be many who will be stirred by the shock of this dreadful story to a deeper and more sympathetic understanding with the conditions that surround them on every side (Drinker, 1918, Intro).
7. REFERENCES


