



# Earthquake Exodus, 1906

*Richard Schwartz*

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Earthquake Exodus, 1906, Berkeley Responds to the San Francisco Refugees, by Richard Schwartz is a book that tells the story of the ten-week relief effort in the East Bay after the 1906 Earthquake and fire. Earthquake Exodus, 1906, celebrates a largely unknown chapter from the aftermath of the great San Francisco earthquake of 1906. Containing many breathtaking photos and illustrations never before published or unseen in nearly 100 years, this new visual history is breathtaking. Berkeley Voice columnist Martin Snapp writes, “even more compelling than the photos are the hundreds of stories of ordinary people doing extraordinary things.” In the story of the relief effort, instigated within hours of the earthquake, the ordinary and extraordinary people of Berkeley began to organize a committee, knowing that terrified masses of stricken refugees would be pouring into their town within hours. As author Schwartz says, “They didn’t wait for government. They didn’t wait for money. They didn’t wait for instructions.” **DID YOU KNOW** • that many people fled to the Berkeley hills the first night of the quake and a number of women died there giving birth? • that Asian refugees were segregated in their own camps and sections of town and that even the embassy of China inspected their plight and did not complain? • smallpox erupted in Berkeley during the relief effort? • industrial West Berkeley, filled with a working class immigrant population, actually caught fire after the earthquake? “Schwartz explains how Berkeleyans generously responded by setting up temporary camps, dispensing food, listing jobs, and even taking in the homeless. He details the measures taken to ensure public order and health as city and university officials struggled to deal with thousands of disoriented, impoverished, and sometimes dangerous strangers, many separated from their loved ones—everyday details long forgotten but worth study by those who wish to better prepare for the next great shake.” Dr. Gray Brechin, author of *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin*. (Dr. Brechin wrote the forward to Schwartz’s book).

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