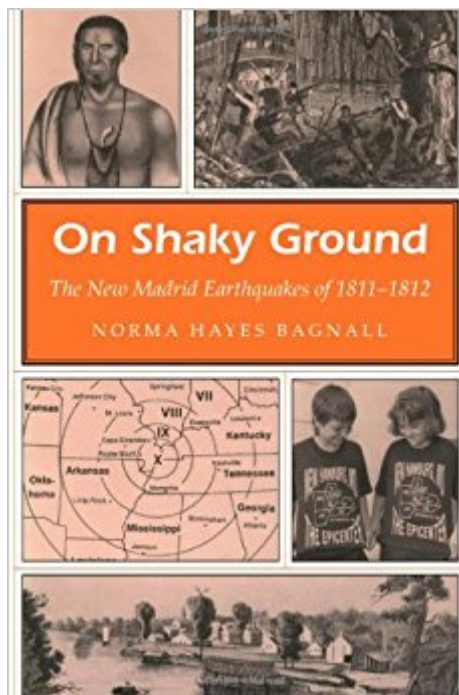




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# On Shaky Ground: The New Madrid Earthquakes Of 1811-1812 (MISSOURI HERITAGE READERS)



## Synopsis

Although most Americans associate earthquakes with California, the tremors that shook the Mississippi valley in southeast Missouri from December 16, 1811, through February 7, 1812, are among the most violent quakes to hit the North American continent in recorded history. Collectively known as the New Madrid earthquakes, these quakes affected more than 1 million square miles. By comparison, the 1906 San Francisco earthquake affected only 60,000 square miles, less than one-sixteenth the area of the New Madrid earthquakes. Scientists believe that each of the three greatest tremors would have measured more than 8.0 on the Richter scale, had that measuring device been in place in 1811. Vibrations were felt from the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic coast and from Mexico to Canada. The quake zone was in constant movement during this period. Five towns in three states disappeared, islands vanished in the Mississippi River, lakes formed where there had been none before, and the river flowed backward for a brief period. Providing eyewitness accounts from people both on the land and on the river, Bagnall captures the fears of the residents through their tales about the smells and dark vapors that filled the air, the cries of the people, the bawling of animals, and the constant roar of the river and its collapsing banks. *On Shaky Ground* also traces the history of the founding of New Madrid and considers the impact of the earthquakes on population and land in southeast Missouri. Predictions for future earthquakes along the New Madrid fault, as well as instructions on preparing for and surviving a quake, are also included. Informative, clearly written, and well illustrated, *On Shaky Ground* will be of interest to all general readers, especially those interested in earthquakes or Missouri history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Although most Americans associate earthquakes with California, the tremors that shook the Mississippi Valley in southeast Missouri from December 16, 1811, through February 7, 1912, are among the most violent quakes ever to hit the North American continent in recorded history. Collectively known as the New Madrid earthquakes, these quakes affected more than a million square miles. By comparison, the 1906 San Francisco earthquake affected only 60,000 square miles, less than one-sixteenth the area of the New Madrid earthquakes. Scientists believe that each of the three greatest tremors would have measured more than 8.0 on the Richter scale, had that measuring device been in place in 1811. Vibrations were felt from the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic coast and from Mexico to Canada. The quake zone was in constant movement during this period. Five towns in three states disappeared, islands vanished in the Mississippi River, lakes formed where there had been none before, and the river flowed backward for a brief period. Providing eyewitness accounts from people both on the land and on the river, Bagnall captures the fears of the residents through their tales about the smells and dark vapors that filled the air, the cries of the people, the bawling of animals, and the constant roar of the river and its collapsing banks. On Shaky Ground also traces the history of the founding of New Madrid and considers the impact of the earthquakes on population and land in southeast Missouri. Predictions for future earthquakes along the New Madrid fault, as well as instructions on preparing for and surviving a quake, are also included.

Norma Hayes Bagnall never forgot the tales her mother told her in her youth about the New Madrid earthquakes, just as they were told to her mother when she was a youngster growing up in the early twentieth century in New Madrid, Missouri. Professor of English at Missouri Western State College in St. Joseph, Bagnall is also the author of *Children's Literature: Passage to the Sea*.

I found the book, "On Shaky Ground" an interesting book. I appreciate that the author gives an early history of the areas affected by the earthquakes, as well as explaining the aftermath of the disaster. She also tells about the different ethnic groups living in the region at the time and how the seismic events impacted them. I really liked the eyewitness accounts. There are a couple of chapters that

give information about preparing for earthquakes and the future predictions for the New Madrid area. Appendices help clarify how to interpret the Richter and Mercalli scales. Overall, I found the book informative. It is not a long read; I finished it in a couple of hours. It is a good book for anyone who wants a short, informative read about the New Madrid seismic events of 1811-1812.

A pretty good summary of information about the New Madrid earthquake, but if you want to know that basic information with some fascinating related stories, read "When the Mississippi Ran Backwards: Empire, Intrigue, Murder, and the New Madrid Earthquakes" by Jay Feldman

This book is well-written and organized. It was a very enjoyable read. The author researched the subject well and the reader can get a feel of what it must have been like to suffer in this enormous earthquake. This book is a history of the largest earthquake in the history of the U.S. The local residents gave the New Madrid Historical Society descriptions of what they experienced. I understand because my great-great grandparents were living near the fault in Tennessee and experienced the horrors of this disaster. Their stories have been handed down for generations. My grandmother told me our families' stories about this horrific experience. When this fault becomes active again the cities of Memphis all the way to St. Louis will be in terrible danger. Sara Howard, Author of "Something Funny Happened on The Way to The Moon" and "The Biggest Explosions in The Universe".

Enlightening, I grew up in the midwest, I had no idea of the magnitude of the damage.

I have been trying to find information on the New Madrid Quakes for some time and this particular book while not lengthy, was sufficiently detailed to provide information I was not already familiar with. At the same time, and of course due to the dates during which the quakes occurred, there was, and is, limited factual evidence to rely on.

Full of the information I was looking for on The New Madrid Earthquake including pictures and maps. Learned more than was I was told in the past.

Interesting book! Enjoyed basic topics covered!

Service and product were excellent.

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