EARTHQUAKE STRIKES!

Monday, January 14, 1907, 3:30pm - Jamaica experiences one of the most severe natural disasters in its history.

EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS

“I heard the noise of an electric car coming from...the south. The noise increased...till it was opposite the house, and then just as the rushing should have began to diminish, there was a sudden and alarming increase of rushing and rumbling sound, accompanied by a savage tearing and rending noise” (Cornish, 1908, p. 246).

“Throughout the shock the whites behaved with a considerable degree of calmness, being without the unreasoning fear which characterized the blacks, yet none could reach the open too soon” (Fuller, 1907, 704).

“...when the cloud of dust lifted, it was seen that the walls of the houses and stores had for most part fallen across the narrow streets, burying the foot-passengers, the horses and carriages...In other cases, the walls of the stores had fallen inwards, burying buyers and sellers alike” (Hall, 1907, p.1). Hall, M. (1907). Third Report on Earthquakes in Jamaica: The Great Earthquake of January 14, 1907 and the After Shock. Kingston, Jamaica: GPO

DEVASTATION

The fire which followed the shaking, destroyed parts of the business and warehouse district of Kingston. There were reports of a tsunami event affecting the towns of Buff Bay, Portland and Annotto Bay, St. Mary.

In his timeline of the development of the city of Kingston, Jamaica, author Anthony S. Johnson captions the year 1907 with:

“Kingston was destroyed by earthquake. 30,000, including the Mayor C.W. Taitt, die. Era of brick buildings abruptly ends. Concrete nog construction becomes the norm. Residential development of St. Andrew begins in earnest” (2006, p. 29).

Documenting the 1907 Earthquake, Kingston, Jamaica

An earthquake is a geological phenomenon resulting from the sudden release of stored energy accumulated along geologic faults or by volcanic activity within the earth's crust. Jamaica was affected by such an event in January 1907.

This display commemorates the occurrence of the 1907 Earthquake in Jamaica and highlights resources concerning the event which can be accessed via the Mona Library.

Historic events can be illuminated for the present day audience through various surviving documents.

The Mona Library is a portal for accessing various types of resources which offer scientific information, imagery and eyewitness accounts of the occurrence and aftermath of the 1907 Earthquake.