

## Four Historical Disasters

Volcano: Mt. Vesuvius (near Naples, Italy)

Major eruptions: AD79 and 40 times since including 1631, 1906, and 1944

Death tolls: AD79 – approximately 20,000 killed in city of Pompeii; 18,000 killed in near-by areas.

Source: Joyce Robins. 1990. *The World's Greatest Disasters*. Secaucus, New Jersey: Chartwell Books, Inc., pp. 8-10.

Earthquake and Tsunami (tidal wave): Lisbon, Portugal (numerous cities in southern sections of Portugal and Spain were impacted by the tsunami as was the western coast of Morocco, the Azores Islands and elsewhere; fires destroyed numerous buildings in Lisbon during the next five or six days)

Date: November 1, 1755

Death tolls: estimates vary from a high of 70,000 to more conservative estimates ranging between 5,000 to 10,000.

Sources: Russell R. Dynes. 2000. "The Lisbon Earthquake in 1755: Contested Meanings in the First Modern Disaster." *TsuInfo Alert 2* (August):10-18 and Jan T. Kozak and Charles D. James. 2000. "The 1755 Lisbon Earthquake and Tsunami." *TsuInfo Alert 2* (August):3-4.

Hurricane: Galveston, Texas

Date: September 8, 1900

Death toll: Approximately 6,000 on Galveston Island; additional deaths occurred on the mainland so higher estimates vary between 10,000 to 12,000 overall.

Property damage: Total of \$30,000,000; 3,600 homes, plus commercial damage; about one-third of the city (1,500 acres) was completely destroyed; U.S. Census listed population in 1900 at 37,789

Source: David G. McComb. 1986. *Galveston: A History*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, pp. 121-122.

Earthquake: San Francisco, California (at least 52 large fires resulted from the quake)

Date: April 18, 1906

Death toll: Approximately 700

Property loss: 500 blocks burned; 38,000 buildings destroyed

Source: Joyce Robins. 1990. *The World's Greatest Disasters*. Secaucus, New Jersey: Chartwell Books, Inc., pp. 20-23.