Edith Irvine: Her Life and Photography

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EDITH IRVINE
HER LIFE AND PHOTOGRAPHY

by

Wilma Marie Plunkett

A Master’s Project For American Studies

Brigham Young University

June, 1989
This Master's Project, EDITH IRVINE, HER LIFE AND PHOTOGRAPHY, is submitted for your information and pleasure. When I elected to change the subject of my Master's Thesis, the David M. Kennedy Center of Brigham Young University changed my status to non-thesis.

I received my Master's Degree in August 1989. Now, in June 1990, it seems appropriate to have the Master's Project printed and distributed. In doing so, I wish to acknowledge the encouragement and support of some of the many persons whose combined efforts made the completion possible.

Mentor: E. Dennis Rowley, Curator, Archives & Manuscripts

Project Committee: Eugene England, Committee Chairman
Wallace M. Barrus, Committee Member
Frank W. Fox, Committee Member

Orals Committee: Frank Fox, Committee Chairman
Wallace M. Barrus, Committee Member
LeGrand L. Baker, Committee Member

Project Editor: Linda Hunter Adams

Project Helpers: Leda J. Farley, Extra-mile Friend
William (Wally) Mahler, Photo Lab Tech

Support People: The many individuals cited in the text, in California (North and South) and in Utah.

Collection Donor: James Irvine, the nephew who wanted his aunt's work recognized, cared for and cared about.

Originator: Edith Irvine, who started this whole thing by being a photographer with vision and sensitivity.
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INTRODUCTION TO MY MASTER’S PROJECT

by

Wilma M. Plunkett

383-16-5939

In mid-1988, Brigham Young University received a high-quality collection of photographic glass plates made by Edith Irvine at the turn of the century. The plates, her camera and other photographic equipment, and miscellaneous publications were donated to BYU by her nephew, Jim Irvine.

When the plates arrived and the Archives Photolab had them proofed, we realized that not only were the San Francisco earthquake/fire and other areas of California history recorded, but we had, in fact, the work of an outstanding photographer. As we compared the proofs with the work of other photographers who handled similar subjects, we called on faculty members qualified to judge her work. All were unstinting in their praise. As our Archives Curator, Dennis Rowley, looked at them, he said, "I’ve never seen a set of photographs create a mood like these do."

The more I worked with them, the greater my need to do more than just process and preserve. As I discussed the collection with the faculty members, it became evident to me that I should make a change in my graduate program. I was determined to learn more about the photographer. Due to the time elapsed since her death, her nephew was able to tell me very little about his aunt, as she had not been an active part of his childhood. That left his mother as the most likely candidate for research.

Telephone calls to Jim Irvine, his mother, and the San Francisco Photoarchivist resulted in my making plans for a research trip immediately and, if necessary, a follow-up trip later.
Armed with proofs of all the plates in the collection, I made the first trip to California in October 1988.

I visited Jim Irvine in Ridgecrest, California, looked over the family material he had at his place, and made arrangements for him to photocopy several letters and photographs and send them to me for evaluation.

I then went to San Diego, California, to visit Jim's mother, Ofa Jallu. She was the widow of Edith's brother, Robert. Since he was 60 years of age when they married, Edith was already in the latter part of her life and having major health problems by the time Ofa entered the family. Ofa was able to give me some background, but most of her comments were either vague recollections, family tradition, or painful memories.

From San Diego, I went to Central California, primarily Jackson, Mokelumne Hill, hereafter referred to by its popular name, "Moke Hill," San Andreas, and other small communities where Edith had lived (see map).

My first stop was at the Moke Hill Historical Society, where I bought a newly issued local calendar and obtained some names to check out in the area. I contacted the local cemetery sexton, Clovis Laidet, and he met me at the cemetery. He talked with me for nearly an hour about Edith, his memories of her, and people I should talk to.

I then went to Jackson and made contact with the local P.G. & E. man, Don Marshall, the foreman at the Angels Camp facility of Pacific Gas and Electric. This turned out to be the major accomplishment of the trip. We scheduled a meeting at the Amador Inn for that evening.

I had a banquet table moved into my room and when Don arrived, the table, bed, and all other flat surfaces in the room were covered with photos of Electra, the first hydroelectric project in California. He looked at two or three and headed for the phone. He said to his party, "I
don’t care what you’re doing or how important it is, get over to room 124 at the Amador Inn immediately. I have something here you have to see.” He then returned to the photos.

A few minutes later, his friend arrived. I was introduced to Ernest V. Cuneo and immediately learned a new meaning of the term “excess baggage.” It has been a long time since I was so thoroughly ignored. Don and his former boss practically devoured the photos. After about 20 minutes of listening to their excited voices, I asked if they would help me identify the photos by calling out the numbers shown on the back. They were eager to accommodate me, and for the next two hours we accomplished the seemingly impossible. All of the over 100 photos were identified but one. For Mr. Cuneo, it was a case of déjà vu. He was Don’s former boss, retired from P.G. & E. for several years, and he was very familiar with the "old" Electra Project. I was extremely gratified to have the identification process cleared so nicely, the collection was enhanced, and two friends were able to spend some happy time together. My sense of the timely value of those successes was increased on my second trip when I was told Mr. Cuneo had died.

Before I left the area, Don Marshall dropped off a copy of the Historical Summary of the Hydroelectric Development of the North Fork of the Mokelumne River and an oversized map of the area. The map has proven to be of inestimable help in determining which photos to use in the essay. I have extracted from the summary the things needed to round out information obtained on the second trip. All of the material is being retained in the Irvine Collection, thereby making it readily available for anyone wanting to research the Electra Project at a later date.

Several more individual contacts were made before I became ill and had to return to Provo without making it to San Francisco.

On my trip in February 1989, I went to San Francisco first, hoping to finish the research on the earthquake and P.G. & E.
On my trip in February 1989, I went to San Francisco first, hoping to finish the research on the earthquake and P.G. & E.

My first stop was at the office of Gladys Hanson, San Francisco City Archivist. We talked about half an hour, confirming details she had given during our phone conversation in October. She was very enthusiastic about Edith’s photos and called a retired fire chief to "come see." She then introduced me to Frank Quinn, retired Registrar of Voters. He went into great detail about the earthquake, the fires, and the many years of on-going research aimed at digging out the facts regarding the actual destruction, the causes of the different problems involved, and the actual death toll. Most of our conversation was taped and a 37-page transcription of the oral interview is included in the Appendix.

After concluding my visit at the Archives, I tried the P.G. & E. offices. The appointment I supposedly had with the photoarchivist did not materialize. I made over a dozen phone calls, trying to reach someone who could help me. I was unable to make any productive contacts, either in person or by phone so I headed for Moke Hill.

This time, progress was made in learning more about Edith, productive time was spent at the San Andreas County Archives, I made new friends, and I headed back to Provo feeling ready to finish my essays on two of the subjects. However, I was concerned about my lack of information regarding Electra.

The day after my return, I tried the phone route again. I left a message on the answering machine for the P.G. & E. Company Historian, Stan Turnbull. He called the following night. He had looked up what was available on the original company and Electra and he had it in front of him. As we talked, he indicated the company had fired the archivist and since there were no finding aids or records system available, it would be virtually impossible to locate any contract
that may have been negotiated between Edith and the company to photograph the project construction. What information he had was a chapter in a company publication, *The Centennial Story of Pacific Gas and Electric Company 1852-1952*. He offered to photocopy the chapter and send it to me immediately. It is a 14-page history, well-written, which should be of interest to researchers. It is now part of the collection.

As I proceeded with this endeavor, I remembered an early conversation with Jim Irvine regarding what had come about as a result of his donation. He said, "I didn’t mean to change your life!" However, that is what he did. I have learned more about old interests, developed new interests, made new friends with whom I will keep in contact, and learned to be more grateful for my understanding of the human experience.
1. EDITH IRVINE

Edith Irvine was born January 7, 1884, at a place called Sheep Ranch, in Calaveras County, California, the eldest of three children. The middle child, a boy named Clinton, died in infancy. The other boy, christened Robin but known as Robert or Bob, was a close companion to Edith throughout her life. The family moved about within the general area and in 1900 became property owners in Mokelumne Hill (see map of area). As the family fortunes increased due to acquisitions of mines and other real estate, the Irvine family became part of the upper social strata of the area. Edith attended the local school and established a reputation for being "very smart." It is not known how she became involved in photography, but it is a matter of record that she was very good friends with the children of the Peek family and that one of the boys was a photographer. One of his photographs is published in a county historical newsletter in the same time period that Edith was concentrating on photography.

As I studied the early days of California, I learned about the nuances, symbolism, comparisons and contrasts that combine to create and sustain the "difference" that is California. The city of San Francisco, the city of Los Angeles, and their larger counterpart, the state of California, are individually and collectively a state of mind.

Indomitable men and women, sparked by romantic dreams of the past, present, and future, dare to be different. They are willing to risk all their tangibles for the intangible. They seek the promises of a Garden of Eden. They are disdainful of those things that are counter to their pursuit of personal pleasures or accomplishments. They subscribe to emotion as opposed to realism.
Having lived in California for 30 years, and travelled the length and breadth of the state, I’ve had plenty of opportunity to compare and contrast the Bay Area and the Santa Monica area—the geography, the people, the dream. Each has a tendency to consider "self" as best but when it comes to outside questioning or challenging, there is a girding of the loins and a unified front.

As I learned about Edith Irvine, I found many of the above-noted California Romanticism characteristics in her. She came from a socialite, aristocratic background. She valued a good education and obtained it. She dared to dream. In a time when women photographers were rare, she became one of the best. And yet, according to Moke Hill residents who remember her, she loved to be a tomboy and roughhouse with the boys. She had the attributes of a lady and the behavior patterns of a man. She was "game" to try just about anything once.

According to those who remember her, she was a roaring lion or a purring kitten, depending on her mood at the moment. She acted brashly but, with a camera in her hand, she became an observant and feeling artist who would settle for nothing less than her best. There is evidence of her willingness to do whatever was required to get the shot she wanted, the shot that many other photographers would not see.
My only explanation for the chain is that it might be part of her horse equipment. The hasp could hook into the bridle. She could have ridden her horse to the studio. It would be characteristic.
Her grade school diploma is dated June 22, 1897; so her school picture must have been taken when she was 13 (see photo no. 1).

![Photo No. 1](image)

**Photographer Unknown**

**Edith as a student**

Edith is on extreme left third row up.

Edith had created a darkroom in a rear corner of the house, so it is within reason that she and her classmate, Frank Peek, worked together. Frank is identified in an issue of the County Historical Bulletin as a "teen-age" photographer.

Although there are apparently no documents available to prove it, family tradition says she was hired to photographically document the construction of the Electra Project, which started in 1898, one year after her graduation. The Electra Project, built by the forerunner of Pacific Gas & Electric Company, was finished in 1902.
I found no record of Edith’s activities until the earthquake in 1906. The next record shows her as a schoolteacher, beginning date unknown. (A sample of the state Teacher’s Exam is included in the Appendix.) Presumably, she taught until about 1931. Bad health necessitated changes in her life style. She died in 1949.

The photo below is the only one available showing her as a teacher with her class (see photo no. 2). The date is unknown. It was taken in Moke Hill.

![Photo No. 2](image)

One of Edith’s classes

Edith is second from left, top row.
Moke Hill's resident author, Lirrel Starling, in her book *Chronicles of Mokelumne Hills*, wrote:

I am thinking of the country towns in the Mother Lode, from 1900 to about 1929. Society was extremely, sharply defined for most--on its smaller scale, a duplicate-once-removed, of life in the American cities of that period. Modest little girls in high-necked serge dresses, wearing huge hair bows; and proper little boys in knickerbockers and blouse waists, went to the same community schoolhouse as the washerwoman's children, the town drunkard's kids, the ranchers' overalled offspring--but they were as far apart, socially, as the poles. Nice children had folding "leatherette" lunch boxes, thin-cut sandwiches in paper napkins gaudy with floral patterns edged in gold and silver gilt; less fortunate (?) children carried lunch to school in the smaller lard buckets or the very familiar two-handled tin pails which had originally held George Washington and Dixie Queen Plug Cut Tobacco.

Edith and Bob were in the upper social strata referred to in the previous quotation. They apparently mixed with the other children, of all backgrounds, in school activities and part of the town activities. However, their mother, Irene, never let them forget they were of the higher social level. Photo no. 3 shows them as children of the upper class.
The aristocrats, Robert and Edith

One of the first things Jim's mother, Ofa, emphasized to me was that Irene, the mother of Edith and Ofa's husband, Bob, was a very domineering mother who felt that her children were incapable of making decisions for themselves. It was, apparently, her hope that her children would never marry, and she did what she could to make that hope a reality. Friends were
allowed at the home only so long as there was no indication the relationship might develop into anything serious (see photo no. 4).

Photo No. 4

Edith and Bob

This may have been taken about the time Bob obtained his teacher's certificate in 1901.

Bob did not marry until he was about 60, and he was 62 when Jim was born. Edith got rebellious when quite young and announced her engagement to a young man who did not meet with Irene's approval. According to Ofa, Irene engineered a trip to a gypsy fortuneteller, and Edith was warned she should never marry because she would die in childbirth. It is not known if Edith broke her engagement because of that visit, but, in any event, she did not marry. Ofa indicated Edith did have some men friends along the way, but it never went beyond that.
When Bob, at 60, married Ofa who was only 35, both Irene and Edith were horrified. Not only was Ofa not of a suitable family, she was too young. By the time it had been arranged for Bob to take Ofa to meet her in-laws, she was pregnant. When the plan to make the trip was made known to her, Edith wrote to Bob, saying, "You are welcome to come anytime but don't bring your young, pregnant wife". Ofa told me that Bob's response was "both or neither". Ofa spent more money than she wanted to, but she bought a very nice, blue suit, reminded herself she had a Master's Degree and was a school teacher, and away she went, determined to tough it out. She indicated the first few days were pretty bad, but, by the time the visit was ended, she was at least being tolerated. Evidently, Edith must have softened somewhat because Ofa said that although Edith never supported Bob in any of his endeavors, in the later years Edith was very good to her and Bob.

Bob was considered to be very bright--by his widow, his co-workers, and the people with whom I talked in Moke Hill. Edith, however, did not share this opinion. Everyone especially mentioned his ability in mathematics. Ofa explained that the problems Bob had were probably the result of dyslexia, a condition that was not being diagnosed in those days, so Edith would not have had that information on which to base her judgment of Bob's actions (she often made the statement that Bob was dumb). Dyslexia would help explain some of the scores he received on his teacher's certificate examination. Apparently, he was a very good carpenter and worked the mines in the summer, particularly the Mercury Mine in Lake County. That is where he met Ofa. During the winter months, he was a professional gambler in Moke Hill. (Perhaps his mathematical abilities stood him in good stead in that endeavor.) Multiple phone calls prior to
leaving Provo established that my first contact in Mokelumne Hill should be with the cemetery sexton.

I met the sexton, Clovis Laidet, at the cemetery. As we stood by the Irvine family plot, he recalled memories of Edith. He laughed as he told me about seeing her come down from her home up on the hill, either on her favorite horse or in her Model "T" car, with her long red hair flying in the breeze. She scattered people, birds and animals as she flew through town. He gave some background information on her which helped me get a better understanding of the girl and woman. As we talked, I received the distinct impression that although there were periods of rebellion, the influence of a domineering mother marked her life.

He alerted me to problems I would have in interviewing people in the area, due to clannishness and family feuds. He said, "We are happy to talk about each other among ourselves, but as you are talking with us individually, you must remember you are an outsider, and we may or may not give you the time of day".

I visited a former pupil of Edith’s in a convalescent home in a nearby community. He is 83 and blind. When I mentioned Edith’s name, his face brightened up and he straightened up and said, "Oh, yes, she was my teacher for the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th grades. She was a real good teacher. She was awful strict but she was fair. Of course, she was crazy". I then said, "I understand she was engaged to someone for a short time. Do you happen to remember the fellow’s name"? I’m certain that if he had been able to use his eyes they would have withered me. He stiffened up, snapped, "I don’t know anything about her love life", and closed his mouth tightly. The interview was ended. I found many already-tight mouths during my visit.
Some of my contacts seemed delighted that someone cared about Edith and were very cooperative in telling me what they could recall, but in a couple of instances, I had the distinct impression they were giving me a con job and would be laughing with their friends later about how they led me down the garden path.

One thing which was a continual source of amazement to me was the shocked reaction of the people when I told them about the photographs. It seems that although she had a photography setup in her home, and her own logo, nobody remembered hearing anything about her being a photographer (see photos no. 5 and 6). My extract from the 1910 Census records shows her occupation as photographer. They knew her as a schoolteacher. And, no one mentioned on either trip that during the time period including July 7, 1944, she was the editor of the Calaveras Weekly, the Moke Hill newspaper. We have that issue in the collection. Everyone I talked with referred to her as "crazy" when speaking of her later years, even as they mentioned her kindness.

When I visited Doris Tyrell at the Calaveras County Historical Society in Moke Hill, she assured me the Historical Society did not have any material on Edith, even though the Irvine family was one of the most prominent in the area. As I was leaving the office, I noticed some newly issued calendars which carried photographs of the area. I bought one for the collection.

When I looked at it, back in Provo, I found Edith and Bob prominently positioned in a photograph of the 4th of July "doings", circa 1915. I created quite a sensation on my second trip when I brought the photograph to several people’s attention.
My visits with Lorrainey Kennedy at the San Andreas County Archives and Bill Fuller at the San Andreas Historical Society were fruitful. The photographs opened some doors for assistance on my return trip.

Before leaving the area, I located the Irvine family home. I had no difficulty in identifying it. It looks practically the same as in the old photograph (see photo nos. 5 and 6).

This closeup of the family home is included to reinforce the local people's memories of Irene, Edith's mother, as the socialite lady who kept her front yard looking like a park. Presumably, Edith did part of the work, since she lived at home for many years.
This house is the only one still standing of the five residences once owned by the family. The fence line is now a paved road just across Highway 49 from the main street in Mokelumne Hill. There is now a circular driveway in front of the stone wall. I made the circle on each trip and, somehow, felt closer to Edith.
After my return to Provo, there was further contact with Jim on some specific points, more material came in the mail, and analysis of information received on the trip gave me more direction on what needed to be done on the second trip.

The photocopies of family letters, currently held by Jim Irvine, added to the insight of what made Edith "tick". One envelope was marked "IMPORTANT--DON'T DESTROY". It contains a 5-page letter from a relative spelling out Edith's ancestry as traced by the noted genealogist Henry Dudley Teetor. The genealogy goes back to "Robert of the Mountain", a knight of William the Conqueror. The Hill family record (Edith's mother, Irene was a Hill) was written on a boar's hide in the 12th century. It is in the British Museum. One relative was High Lord Treasurer in Cromwell's time. Another owned the Pennsylvania farm where William Penn made his treaty with the Indians. Edith's grandfather came to California in 1849. Her family tree includes two Ohio governors, General Sherman, and the Washingtons. The most pertinent paragraph reads, "You are eligible to the 'Daughters of the Revolution' on the Lawson side and to the 'Pioneers' Daughters of California' on the Hill side". The letter is dated April 21, 1912, written by Edith's aunt, Mary J. Arnold.

I found no evidence that Edith followed through on becoming a member of either organization, but I do have documentation she became a member in 1912 of the Eastern Star, the woman's group of the Masonic Lodge, Hilda Chapter 194, Moke Hill. When that chapter was disbanded in 1928, she transferred to the Azalea chapter in San Andreas. The last dues receipt available is dated 1932.

A letter of 1905 spells out many details of inheritance, property disputes with mine-jumpers, and lawsuits concerning manipulation of stocks by business associates—manipulations
to the detriment of the Irvine family. A follow-up letter dated 1908 gives details of how the Irvine interests in the O'Connor suit over mine ownership had been jeopardized by the loss of legal documents in the San Francisco Earthquake.

A letter of 1923, from her Aunt Mary, cites how Edith had returned gifts, apparently the previous Christmas, suggesting limiting contact to either a card or letter. And yet, at the time of the letter, Edith had just sent a Postal Money Order and a large box of assorted home-grown fruits and nuts, a fruitcake, chocolates, and handkerchiefs.

Another letter, dated October 2, 1946, mentions poetry written by Edith and published in the *Family Circle Magazine*. I haven’t been able to locate a repository that carries that periodical that far back. I have phoned the magazine and asked to have the poem tracked down, if possible, so a copy of it can be included in the collection. There has been no response.

A major breakthrough came about on the second trip while I was staying at the Laidets’. From his grandmother’s papers he handed me an item that gave meaning to the trip. It was the School Directory of Calaveras County for the school year, July 1, 1925, to July 1, 1926. The listing of the members of the Board of Education included Edith Irvine. She was also listed as the principal of the Moke Hill High School. Finally, I had a tied-down date with which to work.

The next day, I went to the San Andreas Archives with my new information and ran into another example of people charged with responsibility for historical records and ignoring that trust. It seems that several years ago the County Offices where School District Records were stored decided those old ledgers were taking up too much space. They randomly selected one shelf of leather-bound ledgers pertaining to a variety of school record information, sent that segment to the Archives for storage, and tossed the rest.
The archivist and I went through the salvaged material to find a grouping that might help me. I then took the applicable material and located payment records for teachers' payroll, including Edith, from October 1920 (her pay was $120/mo) to June 1926 (she had jumped to $155/mo). There were, however, several gaps which could have meant she was ill, on a trip, or trapped in the practice of the day: The teacher's paycheck was last on the list each month; if there wasn't money to pay them after the county's other bills were paid, the schoolteachers had to wait. The archivist told me about a male teacher who was paid in November and then had to wait until the middle of the following March, at which time makeup payments were made. Nothing was mentioned regarding how he paid for rent, food, and other essentials during the waiting period.

In that same set of records, I located the results of the teacher's exam which Bob took to get his teaching certificate at the age of 18, in 1901. Edith's exam would have been similar because of its being applicable to the same state. A copy is included in the Appendix. The teachers' exam was given over a period of two weeks, eight hours a day, under close supervision. The candidate had to live with his sponsor during that two weeks, and no outside activity was allowed. Also included in the Appendix is a two-sheet sample of the test questions used in the exam.

Ofa indicated Edith graduated from high school in Berkeley, California. I have not yet determined when but I must assume it was after 1898, because it was in that time period that she was hired by the forerunner of P.G. & E. to document the Electra Project, which was finished in 1902. Since Edith was only 22 when she took the earthquake pictures in 1906, she must have
already established a good reputation as a photographer while still a teenager. Jim remembers she had a darkroom in a lean-to on the back of the family home. Basically, she must have had a good future until she got involved with drugs.

Edith had a medical problem that involved great pain in her joints throughout her body. Since the doctors could not readily diagnose it, the plan of attack was painkillers. Jim told me he remembered talking with his dad about it, and Bob indicated his dissatisfaction with Edith’s doctors. He felt they over-medicated her over a long period of time and got her hooked. At any rate, at an undetermined date, Bob had to have her committed to a hospital in San Francisco for six weeks of drug rehabilitation, after a suicide attempt.

Somewhere along the line, Edith began to combine her continuing medication with wine and became an alcoholic as well. This, too, led to hospitalization to get "dried out," but it didn’t take. I am inclined to think her practice of taking aspirin by the handfu1s, followed by quantities of hydrogen peroxide to nullify part of the aspirin reaction in her stomach, followed by wine just on general principles, had a lot to do with her mental deterioration as well as the physical.

Edith was definitely a loner. She had very few friendships of any depth because she was so volatile. Several people in the area mentioned her habit of becoming unfriendly and leaving abruptly in the middle of a friendly conversation for no apparent reason. And no one remembers her ever apologizing for anything. Such behavior could be tied in to the fact that she started losing her hearing at an early age and was practically deaf by the time she was 45. In evaluating the various tidbits collected on my two trips, I gather there were three things which captured and
held her unreserved love--her dog, her horse, and her Model "T." See photo nos. 7, 8, and 9 for her intangible interests.

Photo No. 7  
Photographer Unknown

A Summer Afternoon

Edith provides the music while her friend makes ice cream. This could have been before Edith started losing her hearing. Note the cylinder records in front of the gramophone.
Topography indicates an area near Moke Hill in Calaveras County; people unidentified. Same buggies and farm equipment were used for generations. Woman's clothing indicates ca. 1905-15.
The scene typical of where Edith rode her horse while living at home at Moke Hill. Published in *Calaveras County Information Directory, 1978-79*. It is not Edith’s photo, but it is the kind that she would take.
From the time I first became involved in the life of Edith Irvine, one open link in her life has really bothered me. Since she was so gifted with a camera, obviously liking the work and the life, what caused the switch to teaching? It seemed no one had a clue. One last phone call from Jim has supplied a possible answer.

During World War I, the military developed optical lenses for doing air photography for military reconnaissance. That was accompanied by the development of a clear plastic base of nitrocellulose film. This film was first developed by George Eastman of Rochester, New York, in 1891. The refinement of this film relegated glass plate photography into the background from the feasibility and economic standpoint. By the time the war was over, Edith's financial situation had deteriorated to the extent that, in all probability, she could not afford to buy the new equipment and update her darkroom.

In any event, she turned to teaching, and from the contacts I was able to make with her former students, colleagues, and the townspeople, she was a good teacher, strict but fair. She must have taught until the mid-30's before gradually surrendering to her physical and mental problems. We have a copy of a letter from Dr. Frank Chaffee to the Superintendent of Schools at San Andreas. It is dated March 9, 1939. It states Edith has an incurable disease known as "hemophilia." He refers to her frequent, long, and severe hemorrhages and states, "Her future chances for a long life are very poor indeed."

Obviously, he underestimated Edith because it was not until December 14, 1948, that Bob had to petition for guardianship. It was granted June 8, 1949. By that time, the alcoholism had taken over her life.
Since it is considered medically impossible for a woman to have hemophilia, it can only be assumed that because her symptoms resembled those of that disease her doctor took the easy way out, misdiagnosed the case, and closed the door on the possibility of Edith ever getting her life in order again. A domineering mother, some bad choices in personal conduct, and a medical foul-up combined to negate a fine mind, a great gift in photography, a talent for teaching.

I went on a search for Edith. I found more than I bargained for. I found lost or wasted opportunities. I found an unmarked grave (see photo no. 11). I found myself hurting for and grieving for someone I had never met. I am grateful for the opportunity to get acquainted with and remember someone who had more to offer this world than just being the butt of gossip, innuendo, and ridicule. I shall do the best I can to bring recognition to her work, her contributions.
Of all the photos in this collection, I believe this one best tells the story of Edith's superiority as a chronicler and dramatist. The "accepted" photo, published in The Earth Shook, The Sky Burned, is a "dead" photo. Edith's above, is a "just-died" example of what Ansel Adams called "A frozen moment in time". I consider this as evidence that, by instinct, she knew what to photograph and how.
Irvine Family Plot in Moke Hill Protestant Cemetery

No markers for individual family members. Cemetery records were lost years ago.
EDITH LIVED HERE

- Sheep Ranch, born there.
- Mokelumne Hill, lived, taught school, died there.

+$+$+$+$ Electra Project on Mokelumne River, North Fork.
Family tradition claims that Edith Irvine had made plans to take a trip around the world, over a period of about one year. She had collected a large supply of photographic materials and was planning to leave San Francisco during the day of April 18, 1906. She took the packet boat from Stockton and arrived just after the quake hit. Edith commandeered an abandoned baby buggy, loaded her equipment in it, and headed for whatever awaited her lens. She took pictures all day, staying out of the path of the armed guards, and then headed back for the packet boat. She went back to the Stockton area, developed her photos, rested overnight, and headed back to the scene. She took pictures for three days, avoiding the guards, and thus avoided having her pictures censored by city government officials trying to conceal the magnitude of the damage.

As Frank Fox, professor of history at Brigham Young University, looked at the proofs of Edith’s photos, he was quite surprised to see so many pictures of people watching flames. Supposedly, armed guards had kept people away from areas that had full-blown flames. He noted the number of pictures that showed the people salvaging their belongings. Her photos reflected not only the destruction of buildings but the upheaval of lives (see photo no. 1). As Wally Barrus, professor of photography and design at BYU, went through the group, his comments, as a photographer himself, gave added testimony to the quality of photographs and singularity of composition and subject matter.

As we selected some shots and enlarged them to 16 x 20, we found we had exhibit-quality prints that put the viewer in the scene.
When I showed the proofs to the San Francisco Archives people who are well-grounded in the history of the quake, their reactions further strengthened my belief that Edith Irvine did far more than just aim and shoot--she captured.

Photo No. 1
Below Russian Hill Looking Toward North Beach Fire

Possessions of a lifetime reduced to a rocking chair, a trunk, and some clothes on their backs.
When I contacted the office of the San Francisco Library Photoarchivist, Gladys Hanson told me some of the details she has learned through years of research, details which are contrary to reports published at the time. For instance, photographers' works were censored by the "City Fathers" because they did not want the outside world to know just how bad things were. Many photos were re-touched; death estimates were down-played; every effort was made to cover up the dramatic extent of destruction caused by improperly built buildings (this problem caused by wide-scale corruption of government officials, building contractors and builders) (see photo no. 2). The fear of epidemics was very real; and outsiders were not welcome. She told me the original official death count of between 400 and 500 is being raised practically month by month, due to continuing research, and has now reached over 3,000. A coalition of government agencies and private foundations is seeking to determine just what went wrong so that preventive measures can be taken in present building to avoid such destruction when the next "big one" hits.

She also told me about the year-later incident involving the Palace Hotel. When a wrecking crew approached a still-standing segment, they realized they had hit a hot wall so they called the fire department. It was a good thing they did. When they broke through the wall and let in oxygen, instantaneous combustion started a fire that could have burned down the rest of San Francisco if the firemen hadn't been there.

In 1971, Gladys started researching survivor reports, military reports, journalists writings, and letters from individual people asking for information. Frank Quinn, Registrar of Voters, worked with her on coroners' records, the death records, the orphan records—all official records the city had. Then they decided they had to reach the people, the families that know and care
who died in the quake. Gladys and Frank composed a letter and sent it out all over the country.

The returns are still coming in.

---

Photo No. 2

The Area South of Market Street

This area was filled with poorly built wooden frame houses that folded up in the quake and were speedily consumed by the fire that came along later. Note the bed frames, the only recognizable things left of hundreds of homes.
The death count has been raised to nearly 10 times the original estimate. Today it would be a worse catastrophe. In 1906, at least they had the advantage of being able to leave the city-by ferry (see photo no. 3) or by train. These options are not available today. There is no ferry system, the bridges will be down, and the closest train is at Oakland. Amtrack runs a shuttle bus from Oakland to San Francisco.

These people, salvaging only what they can carry, are headed toward the ferry boats to get away before further disaster hits.
Frank Quinn, now retired, is working full time as a volunteer on the earthquake research. We talked about Hanson’s book, *Earth, Fire and Folly*, which is due out in April. As he looked at Edith’s photos, he continuously made appreciative sounds and comments. I then asked him to give me some background on the research program, for which I refer you to the Oral History Transcript in the Appendix.

Quinn gave the following background:

There was a substantial Japanese colony here, so there were surely more deaths than just two. The Chinese buried their own, and so we have to penetrate that. We have over 3,000 names now. And also, we do not accept anything that’s frivolous or insubstantial.

There were around 30,000 Chinese all the way down Grant Avenue, a few blacks, and a Japanese community of an unknown number in the Goff to Webster area (see the enclosed map).

The Irish were heavily concentrated in the Mission District from 13th Street all the way up to the slopes of Bernal Heights, and from Delores on the west all the way to Potrero Hill on the east.

The Irish District included a heavy concentration of Germans, large enough to support their own church, St. Anthony’s.

Just south of Market was a web of all sorts of light industry, such as boiler makers. The laboring element tended to congregate south of Market, where they worked, which made it easier to get back and forth to work. In those days work was from sun up to sun down, six days a week. They couldn’t afford to waste
any time waiting for a trolley car in the morning, or to get home in the evening (see photos nos. 4, 5, and 6).

Photo No. 4

Irvine Photo

Produce Area near the Docks

Note the armed guard on sentry duty
Another produce area near the docks

Note destruction in foreground and the street, one block away, with many people but no major destruction.
Within hours after the quake, business people throughout the devastated area created impromptu stands to serve the people.

There were a great many schools in that section, public schools and parochial schools both—including St. Brandon, St. Patrick’s, St. Vincent’s, and at least one other. But those all had schools attached, the nuns teaching. Public schools were scattered throughout the neighborhood.
Identification established by the vats still standing. Note the iron gate on the left.

General Funston had come in with his troops from the Presidio within two hours of the quake and had stationed them all around the city. A newly married couple was going to the ferry to spend their honeymoon across the Bay. They ran into a platoon of people digging out and piling up bricks (see photo no. 8). An armed soldier said to them, "Get to work on the bricks." The fellow had to take
off his coat and work for hours while his bride sat and waited for him. When he finished, the soldier waved him on. Before they reached the ferry building they ran into another work party and a soldier told him to get to work. He explained he had already worked on the other one and he was just married, etc. "Makes no difference." He looked at the soldier’s rifle and bayonet and went to work a second time. They finally made the ferry boat. The story is in the San Francisco Archives.

When I asked who paid the expenses involved in recovery, Quinn replied:

A lot of eastern money must have come in because there was great controversy about the insurance policies and I understand some of the companies actually went bankrupt. One of the things was, all these policies had an exclusionary clause that if a building was shaken down, the insurance was null and void (see photos nos. 9, 10, 11, and 12). So, a great deal of business was engendered in proving that the buildings were burned rather than destroyed by the earthquake. In fact, some of the insurance companies refused to pay off, others paid high prices for pictures of buildings shaken down by the earthquake, which they could use to refute the owner’s claim to insurance indemnities, and this went on for quite a few years. I know that by 1910 the litigation was not complete.

Quinn indicated that the federal government fed the people. A few years ago he was looking at a magazine article on the subject, and he found his mother in one of the pictures.
Photo No. 8

City Hall

A good example of the abundance of bricks to salvage.
When I asked him about the "Ham & Eggs" fire caused by a housewife trying to fix breakfast the morning after the quake, he directed my attention to the window we were facing. He then pointed out the path of the 2-day fire which destroyed more than the quake and the first fire. He identified buildings lost and those still standing today. I found myself experiencing an emotion similar to the time I went to the first Cinerama movie--I was there!

Photo No. 9

Irvine Photo

Flood Mansion on California and Mason Streets

Not shaken down, it was burned out. It was thus eligible for fire insurance.
This was knocked down, rather than just burned. However, it looks like it was dynamited as part of the fire break.
A classic example of bad construction that just disintegrated. This type of destruction was scattered throughout the 497 blocks officially declared destroyed on the city map drawn up in 1907.
MAP
OF PART OF
SAN FRANCISCO
CALIFORNIA

SURVEYED AND DRAWN BY PUNNETT BROTHERS, 233 JAMES FLOOR BUILDING, S.F. CAL.

AREA BURNED: FOUR SQUARE MILES
TOTAL AREA OF CITY: FORTY SQUARE MILES
THE 497 BLOCKS WITHIN THE AREA BORDERED BY RED LINE WERE DESTROYED. MARKINGS IN BLACK SHOW NEW CONSTRUCTION

PUBLISHED BY THE CALIFORNIA PROMOTION COMMITTEE
Photo No. 12

Undaunted

Unidentified, burned, proudly standing alone.
Two British nurses went to the emergency hospital, set up in the Mechanics Pavilion, and rendered heroic service. Otherwise it was complete chaos.

Quinn pointed out the Hotel Whitcomb. That was the Interim City Hall following the earthquake and fire. Not all the departments were lodged there but many of them were. In fact, the mayor had his office there too. The other departments were scattered around different places. The Superior Court was in the synagogue at Webster and California. All the trials were held out there. Everything was just dispersed (see photos no. 13 and 14 of regular City Hall).

Photo No. 13
Irvine Photo

Collapsed Columns
Marble columns that weren’t marble.
Looking toward City Hall, wrecked sentinel surrounded by chaos.

A graphic explanation of how the Irvine family lost a large portion of its fortune. Litigation records and paper-support for several law suits involving manipulation and claim jumping of Irvine owned mines were being processed at City Hall. All records, and supporting evidence, were lost.
Quinn urged me to include a human interest story about the firemen:

They had some very bad, hard times. There was a fireman, Captain Cullen, who was a young man in 1906 and he tells a graphic story. Towards the very end, they found an operating hydrant on 20th Street which was quite a hill and they had two steamers with horses, horses too exhausted to bring the steamers up the hill. Finally they got a mob of men and they got behind the steamer with the horses and pushed them up that way (see photo no. 15).

Helpless Spectator

It performed after being pushed up the hill by the firemen and citizens
The streets suffered, too (see photo no. 16).

Photo No. 16

Union Street West of Steiner

One side safe, the other side destruction--a perfect example of earth liquidity.
Of the 60 photos in the collection, my favorite was taken after some clean-up was done. I feel Edith captured a stark simplicity that is shockingly graphic. It is past the initial human tragedy and before the human monumental task of recovery is begun (see photo no. 17).

Photo No. 17

The Burned Tree

Nob Hill Looking Southwest. Extreme Right--Hall of Records
Table 1, Cause of Death from the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, was compiled by Gladys Hanson, San Francisco Archivist, and published in December 1987 in California Geology. As noted previously, these numbers are already out of date.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Death Categories</th>
<th>Original Death Toll Released in 1906</th>
<th>Revised Death Toll Compiled in the Current Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASPHYXIATION</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes those killed by lack of oxygen and smoke inhalation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURNS</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes those killed by burns and resulting complications.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRUSHED TO DEATH</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes those killed by falling walls, falling buildings, internal injuries, fractures, and hemorrhages.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPOSURE</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes those killed by pneumonia and inanition (exhaustion).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEART PROBLEMS</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes those who died from heart ailments.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KILLED IN EARTHQUAKE</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Although all casualties were a result of the earthquake or fire, this category was given on death certificates and on coroner's reports.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUICIDE</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER*</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>1498</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The category “OTHER” includes those who died as a result of: drowning, 3; peritonitis, 1; phthisis pulmonalis (tuberculosis and infectious lung ailments), 1; leg amputation, 2; trying to rescue a person, 1; dynamite, 1; shot by soldiers, 1; shot, 1; cirrhosis of the liver, 1; complications of a gunshot wound, 1; blood poisoning following a hysterectomy, 1; and dysentery, 1.
Miners first started diverting water from the North Fork of the Mokelumne River and its tributaries as early as 1855, when they began hydraulic mining. That activity was outlawed in 1884, and the ditch system was used to supply water for electric power to Amador County mines, and eventually to supply water for generating electricity for the mines' power source.

The headwaters of the North Fork vary from 7500 to 9500 feet high and are 30 to 40 miles south of Lake Tahoe. The main tributaries are Mill Creek, Tiger Creek, Panther Creek, Bear River, Moore Creek, Cole Creek, Summit Canyon, and Deer Creek, with the uppermost headwaters being collected in Hermit Valley (see markings on enclosed map). The drainage area of these sources to the Electra Diversion Dam at the West Point Powerhouse is 360 miles. Because of river flow fluctuations, reservoir sites were necessary and development of storage sites was begun in 1872. That is when the hodgepodge of company acquisitions began.

About 1855, the Butte Canal and Ditching Company started the Butte Ditch near the present Tiger Creek Powerhouse. The Butte Ditch extended down for about 19 miles to the mining settlements.

The Butte Ditching Company (they dropped the Canal part) took over the area, relocated part of the system, and created what became known as the Lower Standard Canal. This was about 1868. In 1870 the Sutter Canal and Mining Company took over. In 1873 the Amador Canal and Mining Company acquired the property, completed the Amador Canal to the Tanner Reservoir, near what is now Sutter Hill, and developed a system of ditches to service the mines at Jackson, Sutter Creek, Amador City, and Ione. In 1875, the Amador Canal Mining Company
also took over the Upper Blue and Lower Blue lakes, completing dams there and at Meadow Lake (see photo no. 1).

Photo No. 1

Irvine Photo

Meadow Lake Dam

Note how this photo was framed so we have the tranquility of the lake and the gentle rolling of the wooded area in the background in contrast to the extremely rugged foreground. The foreground gives a dramatic example of the kind of topography that had to be conquered in order to build a dam at this location. The dam was completed in 1875, before Edith became involved with the project. It is located at extreme upper right of map.
In 1887, the company reorganized under the name of the Blue Lakes Water Company and built dams at Twin Lakes and what is now known as Upper Bear River.

Meanwhile, a Polish prince, Prince André Poniatowski and his associates, entered the picture. They bought a major part of the Blue Lakes Water Company stock and built dams on the Upper and Lower Blue lakes, Meadow Lake, and Upper Bear River. They enlarged the Amador Canal, completed the Standard Canal, the Tabeaud and Petty reservoirs and constructed the Electra Powerhouse. In 1890 the company was incorporated so they could develop the Amador Canal and reservoirs to service Stockton and Oakland. Stockton, alone, was to get 17,500,000 gallons of water a day.

In 1896, Standard Electric of California became California Exploration, Ltd., an English corporation. The prince then turned his attention to the problems of economical transportation to the mines and low-cost electric power for their operations. He was contacted by Thomas S. Bullock, a railroad builder from Arizona who had been crowded out by the transcontinental lines. Bullock offered to build a rail line into the Mother Lode region. The prince became president of the Sierra Railway on February 2, 1897. The line was from Oakdale to Tuolumne, a distance of 56 miles, with a 20-mile branch from Jamestown to Angels Camp. The main line is still carrying freight.

Meanwhile, Blue Lakes Water Company acquired control of the Stockton Water Company and, under the leadership of President W. Frank Pierce, worked with the prince in dropping water over 1,040 feet near Jackson to a camp which was renamed Blue Lakes City in 1897. The plant cost $122,500, was paid for by the prince, and was to be repaid in power.

As soon as the Blue Lakes Plant was finished, the prince looked to bigger and better things--a larger hydro plant. He personally explored the mountains, lakes, and water tributaries and reported back to his company. He had dreams of supplying power to San Francisco, but
engineers advised him the distance was too great to handle 40,000 volts. He contacted General Electric, Westinghouse, and the Stanley Electrical Manufacturing Companies. Crocker, San Francisco bank president and Prince Poniatowski's brother-in-law, and G.E. President, Charles A. Coffin, decided it could be done—and that it should be done without involving the English associates so another company came into being, Standard Electric of California, incorporated in West Virginia in 1897 and reincorporated in California in 1899. Their main objective—building the plant called Electra.

Although a copy of the contract is not available, it was, apparently, at this point that Edith Irvine was hired by Standard Electric to photographically document the construction of the Electra Project.

Operating under the name of Standard Electric of California, the prince and his partners, including W. H. Crocker and Alfred Schiff, a London broker, organized a syndicate. The prince, Crocker, and Schiff each put up $25,000 and obtained options of some 20 Mother Lode mines in Calaveras and Amador counties. They then contacted a group of wealthy Englishmen who put up $300,000 and they were in business. They brought over an American engineer, Richard A. Parker, who had been employed by Consolidated Goldfields in South Africa. He became General Manager of the operations.

Specialists in every field of endeavor involved in the construction of Electra were called into the fold. Camps were established to build storage reservoir dams at Blue Lakes, Meadow Lake, and Bear River. Materials were hauled by wagon from Ione, 60 miles away, or from Carson City, Nevada. The equipment was so heavy it required teams of 12 to 20 horses and mules or donkey engines on wheels (see photo nos. 2, 3, 4, 5).
Electra Powerhouse Transformer Enroute

2,000 kw Generators
There were 14 mountain camps, employing as many as 1,500 men. Because of the elevation, work could be done only during the summer months, and this led to labor problems. The workers demanded a contract stipulating they would not have to work above 6,500 feet. Since the Blue Lakes area was above 8,000 feet, something had to be done, so the prince hired a shipload of 400 Greeks at New Orleans and had them transported via Nevada to the sky-high camps. The work crews also included California Basque and some Shoshone Indians.

Then in 1899 a material problem was successfully solved. The line to be built from Electra to San Francisco was designed to carry 60,000 volts. The three companies capable of supplying and installing insulators declared anything over 30,000 volts would not be safe. After an emergency trip to New York, and lengthy negotiations, the Prince arranged for a new type of insulator to be built and successfully tested. It consisted of a shaft of glass mounted on a threaded eucalyptus pin and a grooved top of porcelain. The three parts were assembled in California, where the wooden pins were made, and successfully installed. The insulators made by the Locke Company carried from 40,000 to 60,000 volts over the lines owned by Standard. The line ran from Electra to Mission San Jose where it split, with one branch going to Oakland and one around the lower end of the Bay and North to San Francisco. The Oakland line ran 119.8 miles; the San Francisco line was 143.2 miles with a tap line to San Jose. The new method used a 37-strand aluminum cable instead of a copper conductor, creating a savings of $200,000.

The construction took four years. The last reservoirs, Meadow Lake and Lower Blue Lake, were not completed until after Electra went into operation in 1902. The new dams tripled the storage capacity to 23,554 acre feet. The Upper Standard, a new canal, was built above the
old Amador Ditch to carry water along the canyon wall of the Moke River to Lake Tabeaud, high above the powerhouse (see photo no. 6).

![Image of the Upper Standard Canal](image)

The Blue Lakes Water Company enlarged the Amador Canal, completed the Standard Canal, the Tabeaud and Petty reservoirs and constructed the Electra Powerhouse. When Electra was commissioned in 1902, the prince shut down the Blue Lakes Powerhouse. Later, two more 5000 kw units were added, making a total of 20,000 kw at what is now known as the "old" Electra.

At this point, I would like to include a part of this project that has not received attention in the company histories, the role of the penstock. I don't know if it is because it is considered
an automatic part of the total equipment, but it seems to me, and apparently to Edith, an integral part of those things deserving of special attention. Until this project, I had no idea what penstock was. Now I know. It is a BIG water pipe. Certainly, Edith gave it special consideration in planning and taking her pictures of the Electra Project (see photo no. 7).

Print No. 7

Hauling Penstock to the Electra

Note that Edith, in this shot, concentrated in showing a single unit of the train. See what happened when she took Photo No. 8.
Photo No. 8

Hauling Penstock to the Electra

Note how changing location just a few feet gives a totally different shot. In this photo, the steepness of the incline is clearly indicated. When I made the trip up this road in February 1989, I gained a further appreciation for this image. The curves are so sharp that in some instances the driver would not be able to see the lead horses or mules. If something went wrong with the unit in front of him, he would have no chance to save his team or himself because he would not be able to see the trouble coming.
As you look at the map at the front of this section, you will find penstock connecting water sources, tunnels, and facilities. Looking at photos 6 and 7 will give a feel of how big this pipe is in comparison to the animals.
As I pulled around that last curve before reaching the Powerhouse, I realized this image was taken part way up the mountain. From my location, it was a LONG way up to the top.
When I showed this photo to people who remembered Edith, I queried, "How did she ever climb that mountain to get that shot"? They laughed and said, "Edith loved a challenge. She would have gotten up there if she had to fly up". I find this photo especially impressive because of the Powerhouse and environs dissolving into the far distance below.
Reference the early part of this essay to get a feel of how many hundreds of power poles would have to be installed just for this project alone.
From the photographic point of view, I consider this one of the most striking photos taken on this project. To so many people involved in this construction, this was just a shed. To me, this is an exhibit print of a vital link in the control of water and electricity.
Photo No. 14
Station Transformer

Photo No. 15
Electra Powerhouse Transformer
Photo No. 16
Irvine Photo

Electra -- In Process

Photo No. 17
Irvine Photo

Electra Powerhouse and Camp
Here again, a look at the enclosed map will assist in getting a feel of what was being done and what it meant in the overall picture. Oakland, San Jose, and San Francisco had hydroelectric power. Farmers had irrigation. Miners had power.

Prince Poniatowski returned to France with his wife and sons in early 1903. He left behind a monumental contribution to the development of California. He also left behind a teenage girl with a camera and dreams of her own.
SUMMARY

Edith Irvine, "little rich kid," photographer, writer/editor, teacher, enigma, dead stranger, entered my life less than one year ago. Now, $2,000 and 4,000 miles later, she is a permanent part of my life.

I started out admiring her photographs, her flair for life, her dedication to the principle of "If you want something, go for it." I shared her enthusiasm and wanted to know more about her. I learned.

Lirrel Starling, in her book Chronicles II of Mokelumne Hill, wrote of the people in the area; "They were not apart from the greater world undergoing change all around them--but they were part of a similar absorption, among corresponding little towns of California’s Mother Lode, in an era when second and third generations--evolving from emigrant nationalities--were being absorbed, with all their ethnic differences, into the fascinating process of being born full-fledged Americans."

The accepted rules of behavior were: do your own thing; don’t take "guff" from anyone; have your dreams and the guts to make them come true; and let the Devil take the hindmost. If you’ve got it, use it; if you don’t have it, go after it. Moke Hill followed the lead of San Francisco. Edith followed the lead of their rules.

Writing these papers has been an arduous and rewarding experience. I have increased my knowledge of the San Francisco earthquake, I have learned about the development of hydroelectric power in Western United States, I have reinforced my belief that one person can make a difference in the lives of many. I have met and learned to respect a person who has been
dead for 40 years but who will live on for a long time through my determination to make her photographic work known. I have made over a dozen new friends. AND, I have grown.

I have learned more about class-consciousness, fighting adversity and overcoming obstacles, and person-to-person contacts than I would have dreamed possible, all because a woman named Edith MADE me want to learn.

In trying to guide my reader to an understanding of the person, Edith, I have shown her through both the eyes of others and of myself. For expansion of the learning possibilities regarding Edith, and her work, I invite you to peruse and study the Edith Irvine Collection, identified as P-585, at the Brigham Young University Photoarchives.
APPENDIX

I. State of California Grade School Teachers Sample Test, 1901

II. Report on standing of Applicants for Teachers' Certification March 1, 1901 (showing subjects covered.)

III. Transcript of Oral History taken 2-21-89 at San Francisco Public Library regarding the San Francisco Earthquake, 1906.
WRITTEN ARITHMETIC.

1. After traveling for 2 days I find my watch 5 hr. 15 min. slow. How far and in which direction did I go?

2. A certain spherical tank holds 33,333 gal. What is its radius? (Give the answer to the nearest hundredths.)

3. Write a sentence containing a clause the subject of a preposition, as an explanatory modifier of subject; an infinitive in apposition with the subject.

4. Give three cases where the connective pronoun that is preferable to who or which.

5. Illustrate by short sentences three different uses of the word that: two of the words are: of; two of; three of what.

6. Discriminate between "a few" and "too little" and "little".

7. In the use of comparative adjectives, when does the latter term include the former? When does it exclude the former? Illustrate.

8. Illustrate by sentences five different uses of the adverb into. Into what classes are they divided? Name and define the different kinds of conjunctions.

9. Illustrate by sentences five different uses of the adverb before. Into what classes are they divided? Name and define the different kinds of conjunctions.

10. Correct, if necessary, the following and give reasons: "What is the matter with him going with us? I think he is of a -value Either you or I are mistaken." "Tell my father's brother, else will I reproach them."

11. How many classifications have verbs? Define each. Give a synopsis of the verb "choose," indicate mode, passive form, third person, plural.
U. S. HISTORY.
1. Give a brief account of the discovery of North America, their
   religion, government and habits of life.
2. Man's great contributions to
   San Francisco Bay:
   dealing with
   wool, gold, wheat, lumber, raisins.
3. The Chinese Empire. What is its
   principal products?
4. Name the countries bordering on
   San Francisco Bay. What countries
   are noted for the following productions:
   wool, gold, wheat, lumber, raisins.
5. The route of a steamship
   from London to Bombay naming the
   waters that are sailed through via the
   Suez canal.
6. France is a republic in North Amer-
   ica, in South America, in Europe.
7. What is the opinion of this great
   country in its efforts at
   discovery and exploration of the
   new world?
8. What caused led the several
   nations to plant colonies where they
   might?
9. How it happened that the
   Spanish language predominated in
   South and the English language in
   North America?
10. How did the European nations
    come to lose their colonies?

CIVICS.
1. Give some short fact concerning
    articles of confederation, balance of
    power, articles of confederation, veto,
    at post facto, pocket veto.
2. Give a brief history of the Fed-
    eral Constitution.
3. How do the following get office:
    United States Senator, Member of
    Cabinet, United States Representative,
    Superior Judge, Mail Carrier in city
    post office?
4. What is a Minister Plenipotentiary?
5. Are courts of law of any use to
    those that never come before them?
   Explain. (b) How long has the Con
    stitution of your State been in
    force?

DRAWING.
1. Define and Illustrate: Horizon, broken
    lines, diverging lines, centre of
    vision, ellipse.
2. Draw a rectangular prism above
    the level of the eye and to the right.
    Indicate holes as having been chiseled
    out of the same.
3. Draw some object based on a
    cone, a cylinder and a sphere.
4. Make a drawing of the given leaf,
    then conventionalize one.
5. Illustrate:
   "The famous tree in the blue sky above
   by a post house,
   whose branches are regions remote by the
   roadside.
   Built over a box for the poor."

GENERAL HISTORY.
1. What is the branch of Latin, three Greek, and
    two Saxon roots. Form derivatives
    from these and define each.
2. What is the origin of the following words
    and their modern definition:
    hygiene, epilepsy, million, tariff, re-
    public, opposition, dollar.

READING.
1. How is color produced?
2. Should the vocal organs be trained?
3. What are defects of speech? How
    remedied?
4. What does a child learn to talk?
5. How should a child learn to read?

MUSIC.
1. What is the effect of a sharp, a
    flat, a natural?
2. What is meant by common time?
    Illustrate triple measure.
3. What is the key when the signa-
    ture is one flat, four flats, two sharps,
    one sharp?
4. Draw and letter the staff with G
    and C.
5. What is transposition. Illustrate.

PENTIMENTH.
1. How many good penmanship be
    acquired?
2. What is your opinion of the differ-
    ent systems taught in your school?
Which system do you prefer? What is
    your method?
3. Is it possible for everyone to be
    come a good penman?
4. Give some samples for movement
    drill exercises.
5. Copy the following:
   (a) How long has the constitu-
    tion of your State been in
    force?
6. Give some samples for movement
    drill exercises.

BOOK-KEEPING.
1. What is a ledger paper? How
    might it be transferred? Give a prom-
    isory note.
2. What is the fill of an Exchange? Write
    in Time Draft. Night Draft
3. 4, 5. Write the following in the
    Journalized D.C., Cash Book and
    Ledger. Double Entry: San
    commenced business with
    cash, $1,200; notes against
    Gen. Washburne for $300, on interest at
    1 per cent per month, dated July 6,
    1901. (b) Deposited $500 in
    Bank of Calaveras. Paid cash for
    a set of account books, $16.
    Book of
    Pages and Co. by check on Bank of Cal-
    averas an invoice of miles and
    $1,200, sold J. W. Sterling on account
    81 cents, white
    fish at $0.00; 10 bbls. pork at $10.00.
    Cash sales $50; Aug. (3) Deposited $300
    in Bank of Calaveras. Aug. 5, Sold A. F.
    Walker 150 lbs. coffee @ 18c; 10 bbls.
    raisins @ $2.75; 25 bbls flour @ 87c; fed
    in payment note @ 30 days for $33.50;
    balance, on account. Paid cash for
    dry goods, $3.75. Aug. (3). (A. F. Walker)
    returned 3 bbls. flour @ 87c. Cash sales,
    $65.50. Aug. (3). Received from J. W.
    Sterling an order on Chas. Smith for
    $75. Deposited in Bank of Calaveras
    $100. Took an inventory—Misc. on
    hand, $100.

SCHOOL LAW.
1. Name four names of the County
    Supervisors.
2. What disposal is made of the
    fees paid by applicants for teachers' certif-
    icate?
3. What is the penalty for insulting
    teachers?
4. When does the school year begin
    and end?
5. Who is secretary of the State
    Board of Education?

METHODS.
1. What is Education? Be
defined.
2. What should a teacher aim to
    develop in the child when he first
    enters school?
3. How would you overcome in-
    attentiveness of your pupils?
4. Write a short plan of a lesson in
    the Second Grade, combining language
    and number work, taught objectively.
5. When and how would you teach
decimal central markings?
6. What should be the relative time
    spent in teaching Mathematics and
    Language? Why?

PHYSIOLOGY.
1. What is the beginning of life? How
    might it be transferred? Give a prom-
    isory note.
2. What is the fill of an Exchange? Write
    in Time Draft. Night Draft
3. 4, 5. Write the following in the
    Journalized D.C., Cash Book
    and Ledger. Double Entry: San
    Andreas, Aug. 12. "Elmer Brown,
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**Standing of Applicants for Teachers' Certificates**

**March 1st, 1901**

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**Percentage:**

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**Standing:** 4.5 7 2 1 3 6
INTERVIEWER: Wilma "Billy" Plunkett, Photoarchivist, Brigham Young University

SUBJECT: San Francisco Earthquake 1906

BP: How did you get involved in researching the earthquake?

GH: I have worked in the library since 1963. When I transferred into the Archives in 1971, I became deeply interested in the earthquake details available here. I started researching survivor reports, military reports, journalists’ writings, and letters from individual people asking for information. I started working on a book on the subject. It’s at the printers now in Japan and is due out April 18 or May. It is being printed in Japan because they now do the majority of printing which used to be handled by the printing center of the West Coast, right here in San Francisco. It is entitled Earth, Fire and Folly. I had reached a point [where] I had gone through everything I could do here. At least, I thought I had. When Frank [Quinn] came into my life we decided we would take the next step: we would hit the coroners’ records, the death records, the orphan records, official records that the city had. So, methodically, he set up a form and then just started going every day to wherever he was working and going through and actually copying records. It wasn’t something you could put on the xerox machine, so he just did it on his form and then he’d come back and transcribe onto 3 x 5 cards the information that he’d gotten, and then we’d just move along.
After we did that we decided, well hey, we can’t stop here. We have to reach the people—it’s the people, it’s the little people, or families that know and care who died here—they’re the only ones. Obviously, the city government didn’t. So we put together a letter and sent it out all over the country and then sat back and waited for those returns, and those returns are basically still coming in. Now they’ve kind of started to drop so you have to stimulate yourself, get excited again. That’s why we’re going for Ireland and Japan. We’re working with Mr. Ito, who is the director of the Japanese Cultural Center. He’s going to turn our letter into Japanese, and my letter is going as a librarian to the librarians in Japan asking for their help to get this into the newspapers. He will be explaining what we are doing, telling them what we need and also the source. So many people don’t tell us where they get the things. We’ve learned as we’ve gone along, so we’re a little more sophisticated now; we know exactly what to request. So we sit back and wait again. When we get through with that we’ll try another country, and our list can go on forever. But it is producing—that is the important thing.

I did a speech the other night in front of a group, in fact my son and I [spoke to] a group in Santa Clara County, and after we were through one fellow raised his hand. He said, "Well, does city government allow you to go out and talk like this." I said, "They really don’t care." And he said, "But, what you’re saying, they should care. You shouldn’t be talking like that." I said, "Whatever we’ve said we can back it up." The city government can’t. The city had to survive and had to be a city that could survive a fire, not [just] an earthquake. Earthquakes are still bad business. So people, even our Chamber of Commerce doesn’t want to talk to you. I mean, that’s it, it’s bad business.
And to think that we have raised our dead from 478 to over 3,000. They just don’t want to hear that. This actually changes all government figures on projecting casualties for the next one, ’cause they’re working on the 478. We’ve got a lot more. So if they have to start changing things, it’s really going to upset them. As historians all we’re doing is recording—we’re not making history. It’s already out there; it’s been made. All we’re doing is going through putting it in a form hopefully that scientists will look at, study and say, hey, it’s time we started working with historians, ’cause they reach the materials we don’t even think about. That’s it.

BP: Yes. If an earthquake were to hit San Francisco now, do we have enough earthquake-proof buildings that we would be able to still survive as a city?

GH: No, we don’t. It would probably be a lot worse than 1906. Just with what we know, it would be far worse. We have more people, more buildings, more in infirm areas. They’ve been warned. People know that you can’t build in areas that are built into the Bay, but they’re still doing it. So no, it would be a worse catastrophe. In 1906 at least they had the advantage of being able to leave the city. Leave it by ferry, or leave it by train. We don’t have that advantage today. There’s no ferry system in this city, our bridges are going to be closed, and we don’t have a train. So you’re going to stay home this time. So, that’s what it amounts to.

BP: And the powers that be don’t want to hear anything to the contrary, so...

GH: No, that’s it. You just have to give it to them slowly.

BP: Dig out a mountain with a teaspoon.

GH: That’s right, but it can be done. It’s just that you have to start some place.
BP: Do you get any kind of censorship at all on what you might have to say?

GH: No. They don’t pay any attention.

BP: They just don’t care.

GH: That’s right, they don’t care.

BP: What was the population at the time?

GH: About 450,000, 420..., we’ve never been able to get an accurate account.

BP: And what is it now?

GH: Today it’s, what, 780,000, something like that. Or it’s up over that, 800; it keeps getting... I don’t know if I’ve got the latest one marked in here, but I have it up in front. Well let’s see...in 1978 it was 658.

BP: Safely at or over 800,000? So we’re double then, practically double.

GH: That’s right.

BP: But this time, no place to go?

GH: That’s right. We’ll stay here this time. And, of course, during the working hours there is well over a million people in this city. Just the people coming in. So, you know, you’ve got people in highrises that might not ever make it out. It’ll be interesting. This study, I’m sure, will keep on going.

BP: Okay, what is Frank’s last name?

GH: Frank Quinn

BP: Quinn? And is he available now?

GH: Yes, Frank is right back here.

BP: Okay. Any other goodies you can think of to kind of slip into this?
GH: I'll see if I have something at my desk that you can carry away with you. This is Frank Quinn.

FQ: Oh, I'm glad to meet you, Billy.

BP: My pleasure.

FQ: I understand you're doing work for a degree.

BP: Yes, this is what started it all.

FQ: Oh, my gracious. Brigham Young. That's wonderful.

BP: We have the glass plates for these photographs.

FQ: All these, oh my gracious. These are beautiful. Market Street. Gladys' new book coming out now has much to do with this.

BP: Yes, she was telling me about that.

FQ: Now this looks like the Western addition. These are beautiful photographs.

BP: We think so.

FQ: We were very fortunate photography was in vogue at the time.

BP: Yes. Some of these prints we have blown up to 16 x 20 and they are absolutely breathtaking photographs.

FQ: Must be gorgeous.

BP: Which brings up a point. How does it happen that there are no pictures of dead people in the streets?

FQ: I don't know. Because there must have been some caught by... Where do you think I was born?

BP: I have no idea.
FQ: A lot of people say Jersey, New York, Philadelphia. I was born in San Francisco. Mission District. This was the accent that they had; it is currently dying out. I really should go over to the University of California, Berkeley, to the library there and have it taped. They do a lot of accents like that. Keep them, preserve them. Put Frank Quinn into infinity. These are marvelous photographs. Oh, oh great.

BP: Okay, it was suggested that perhaps you could help me pick up some of the background of how you've gone at it to do the research to find out the extent of the damage and the people that were lost, etc.

FQ: Well, this is really the brain-child of Gladys Hansen. It was she that first expressed doubts as to the number of people that were killed in the earthquake, and placing them at anywhere from 488 to 525, she found that idea incredible. And that was in the '60s I believe that she started this quest and she went through all of our newspapers, five dailies, for that period the entire month and also the two newspapers in the East Bay and from that she called certain names and then she found that the reporters in the agencies of the situation wrote down names phonetically. So there were variations that she had to go back and she corrected all likely variations so you could determine just who was who. Then following that I retired in 1976 and I, of course, have a very strong interest in San Francisco, and the earthquake was something that my mother told me about so frequently.

BP: You retired from what?

FQ: Oh, I was a Registrar of Voters.

BP: Oh, very good.
FQ: So my mother had told me tales of it, and I heard tales from the old-timers you know. I was born in 1915, so I wasn't too far removed from the earthquake and fire. And, I come over and then we began a more exhaustive search. I went through the old coroners' records; I went through what records there were with the Department of Public Health, deaths, etc. We explored cemeteries. We did everything possible. Even went into the records of orphans, peoples' children that were orphaned at that time. Into whatever wills we could find that would describe the earthquake and fire debts, and we're still not through.

Then, at one time, Gladys got a very good idea and she created something over a thousand letters all the same and sent them to historical and genealogical societies throughout the United States and we received letters from them giving us persons who were killed, the circumstances, etc., from all the states in the United States. It's not braggadocio—it's factual. And also from foreign countries. And now she's going into the East, to Japan. We figure we might find something there. We've only got two Japanese listed as dead. Now it stands to reason that we had a substantial Japanese colony here, so there were more deaths than just simply two. Also, the Chinese buried their own, and so we have to penetrate that, and get more and more deaths as we can, 'cause the Chinese now are less suspicious than they were in 1906 of the white men and they don't claim them.

And I think we can go to the historical societies and find a great deal of it. We're still ongoing all the time. This doesn't stop. We'll continue. So that's what we're doing right at the present moment. We have over 3,000 names now. And also, we do not
accept anything that’s frivolous or insubstantial. If it’s substantial enough to be put into a possible file we put them in such a file—"possible victim." Otherwise, if they are frivolous—grandpa died in 1906 and everybody said he died in the earthquake and fire out there in San Francisco—we discard that. Because at that time anybody who disappeared, disappeared in the San Francisco Quake, on April the 18th, you know.

BP: Yes, a good catch-all.

FQ: One little humorous one though I found. This fellow was on the farm in the Midwest, married and they had, evidently, a very attractive hired girl. He departed with the hired girl one time. He wasn’t seen for over a year, and a fellow traveling from this farm in the Midwest or the area in the Midwest came to San Francisco on the night of April 17, 1906, and of all things, what did he do but bump into the absconder, I guess on Market Street. Anyhow, they had quite a little conversation and they decided that they would meet the next morning at a certain hotel. The next morning, in spite of the earthquake the fellow went there, but the absconder and his illegitimate bride did not show up. I imagine they were probably in Los Angeles by that time. [laughter] But there were elements of humor that you run across every now and then besides the morbidity of death.

BP: Any time you have people, you have an element of humor.

FQ: Oh, you have to, yes, the human race being what it is.

BP: What is the extent of this book that is coming out in April or May? Does this have photographs with it?

FQ: Gladys’ book?

BP: Yes.
FQ: Oh yes, there’ll be a host of photographs.

BP: Okay, this is with photos. And how many pages are we talking?

FQ: I’m not quite sure. I know I’ve proofread the book so many times I should be able to tell you, but there’ll be close to 200 I imagine. I’m not sure of that at all. I don’t know whether it’s gone to the printer or not. But it will be...

BP: She mentioned that it was going to be printed in Japan.

FQ: Yes, unfortunately, our printing business has gone from San Francisco to Japan.

BP: I hadn’t realized that. I’m glad that point came up.

FQ: Oh yah. It’s really pitiful because this was once the printing center of the West Coast, and it’s lost that completely now. In fact the only printing shops I guess that are making any business are those that are printing urgency matters. They have to be printed by a certain date; they can’t afford to send them to Japan. It’s bad. We’re losing an awful lot to foreign competition.

BP: All right, now back at the time of the quake we had a Chinese section, and a negro section....

FQ: If we had a negro section it was so minuscule as to hardly be recorded. Up to World War II, as I understand it, there were 5,000 black people in San Francisco; that was out of a population of about 800,000.

BP: What about other ethnic groups.

FQ: The Chinese were very heavy. There were around 30,000. I’m using a figure that I think is too...

BP: Yes.
FQ: And the Japanese, I don’t know how much, but they were very heavy in what we call Japantown out on the western addition. There were quite a few of them out there and they were quite... They’re nice people too.

BP: There was a Japantown then?

FQ: Yes, that’s a loose phrase. Very loose phrase.

BP: But where was that located as far the map is concerned?

FQ: That would extend from, Oh dear what’s the name of the street now, oh roughly a few blocks west of Van Ness Avenue.

BP: Okay, the Chinese section was where?

FQ: The Chinese section was all the way down Grant Avenue. Otherwise known by the Chinese as Du pont bi.

BP: Looking at this map then that is included in our collection should be helpful.

FQ: It should be, but this is not the map, this is the map of 1906 earthquake and fire. It ran from Goff to Webster. That is the Japanese town.

BP: From Goff to Webster.

FQ: And from about Post, or even Geary, two blocks up. It was a narrow area but very industrious.

BP: Now what about the good old Irish and the English, the Polish and what have you.

FQ: The Irish were heavily concentrated in the Mission District and south of Market. South of Market particularly and the Mission District. My folks were in the Mission District.

BP: In other words, they did tend to stay among themselves?
FQ: Oh yes, very much. I wouldn’t say too much by themselves, but they tended to congregate one into the other. My father came here in 1906, my mother is a native daughter, and he immediately went to Brady Street over here to a woman, an Irish lady that had a rooming house. Then later when he married, he and my mother moved into the Mission District on Portsmouth Street. I was born at 23rd and Howard.

BP: Okay, the Mission District was on Folsom?

FQ: No, the Mission District extended from 13th Street all the way up to the slopes of Bernal Heights—that would be quite a distance—and from Delores on the west all the way to Potrero Hill on the east.

BP: How do you spell that Hill?

FQ: Potrero. Now that was not an exclusively Irish district although heavily settled by Irish because there were also Germans, a heavy concentration of Germans. In fact, they had their own church, St. Anthony’s with a German-speaking parish, so there were enough to support a church in there, too.

BP: What would you say was probably the major ethnic group.

FQ: The Irish. At that time, 1906.

BP: Okay, now in addition to the produce, was there any manufacturing of any kind going on at this time in this area?

FQ: In the Mission District?

BP: No, in the area that was hit by the quake.

FQ: Oh yes, just south of Market was just a web of light industry, all sorts of light industry, boiler makers...oh my gracious, you could find nearly anything down there. And I think
one of the reasons, too, was you had your laboring element south of Market and they tended to congregate about where they worked, which was easier to get back and forth to work. In those days remember it was from sunup to sundown, six days a week. They couldn’t afford to waste any time waiting for a trolley car in the morning, or to get home in the evening.

BP: What about schooling for the children?

FQ: Oh, there were a great many schools in there, public schools and parochial schools both. As a matter of fact St. Patrick’s parochial, because there were so many Irish at St. Brandon, St. Patrick’s, and another, St. Vincent’s, and another church down there, I can’t remember its name offhand now—but those all had schools attached, the nuns teaching. Then there were public schools all scattered throughout the neighborhood. I’d have to go check them out to get the names but there was plenty of education going on.

BP: And what about the cultural aspects.

FQ: Well, they were mostly ethnic. You know, you stuck with your groups more or less for your entertainment. They did have a great many theatres down there too, most of them live theatres. Plays, motion pictures were just about coming in at that time. In fact they were very vogue as you can see from some taken at the time. So there were a great many theatres always catering to people too. And dances, many dances. As a matter of fact my mother met my father at the Knights of the Red Branch Hall on Mission Street—it’s still over there. Rebuilt after the earthquake and fire. And one of the reasons that they went was these people are not very affluent and the money came hard to them, they worked for it, and they just about got by on those wages at the time, so the Knights of
the Red Branch were very gallant—the ladies were free. Mother and her girlfriend, Emma Daley, both went on Saturday nights to the Knights of the Red Branch and both met their husbands there.

BP: The movie of San Francisco with Jeannette McDonald and Clark Gable, how much of that was Hollywood?

FQ: Ninety-nine percent. The only thing good about it was the showing of the earthquake, etc. But when they started to talk about the children on the Coast, there wasn’t a child within a mile of that vicious place. The Barbary Coast was a sink hole of depravity. It was rotten. And you didn’t have the mild atmosphere that they portrayed; that was a bloody place where if there wasn’t at least one dead a night something was wrong. That was just hyperbole.

BP: How did the rich make their money?

FQ: They made it, most of them made it in the mines, Virginia City. The feelers made it in property, a great many Jewish people made it in trade, Magnin’s, etc. So there was plenty of money in San Francisco. It was a very affluent town, both poverty and for riches, and there was very little in between.

BP: I understand there was a tremendous amount of political corruption. Was there any particular party that held sway all the time?

FQ: There was. Well, there was one called the Union Labor Party, and that was the one that devised the corruption at the time, [not just] 1906, but 1904 to 1908. But remember on these things, and this is what irks me on any study of that period, the supervisors and the mayor took bribes. Absolutely, there’s no question about that. Abe [?] purloined it,
he did all the work in between, but there were bribe givers. And they were equally as
guilty as the bribe taker and the whole investigation collapsed when the attorneys went
after the bribe givers. These were men of substance, these were the railroad barons, these
were the head of San Francisco Light and Gas Company. All the big shots that retained
Mr. Roof at a annual stipend of a hundred thousand dollars a year, 1906.

BP: That was a lot of money.

FQ: Yes, and because he was such an expert on the charter, which was the [?] but that's true,
the whole thing collapsed of its own weight and nobody was ever convicted because the
bribe giver could not be touched. He was too substantial a citizen. But the little fellow
on the end that was taking it, that created quite a situation. The bribe givers said he never
took it, he never gave it; the bribe taker said he got it; the city said, "Well, if it was
never given and you got it, there's no reason why we should get the money back," and
they couldn't find any of them so the bribe takers got away with all their money. One
man drove a bakery truck before he was elected to the Board of Supervisors at $18 a
week. I forget how many thousand dollars he had when he walked out. [laughter]

BP: You're supposed to be in business to make money, aren't you?

FQ: I'll tell you sort of a personal story, of a dentist now long since dead--he was much older
than I. I went to him even as a little kid. His name was Dr. Kelly, Buron Kelly. He
was a Welshman. He told me that he and another fellow named Greenhalgh had worked
in the post office prior to, oh, I guess it was about 1912 or so, and they both decided they
wanted to become dentists so they went with their hopes and everything to the University
of California and they were turned down. They didn't have an education sufficient to
enter the University of California. So then they went to the College of Physicians and Surgeons on 16th Street here, and the Dean of it was Dr. Charles Boxton. Dr. Charles Boxton was one of the bribe takers on the Board of Supervisors in 1906 and when he listened to the two fellows he said, "I'll tell you what I'll do." He said, "Everybody says I'm a crook, but I'm gonna give you fellows a chance. I'll accept you." So Greenhalgh and Kelly became dentists. So Dr. Charles Boxton, who is laying out in the cemetery in the Persidio, did a bit of good for the two of them.

BP: Let me change sides on this [tape]. I have some more questions, if you're up to this.

FQ: Oh sure. Some historical sequence of smaller items, we all know what the wealthy did. What did the little do? What did the average workingman do? How did he entertain himself? What did the children do to play, etc.? All of this was wiped out. There was a woman wrote a book called, I forget her name offhand, *The Fantastic City, San Francisco*, a wonderful book but hedonistic, tells all about the wealthy and how they went to this ball and that ball and what they did and how they danced the dances, etc. What about Joe Blow at 16, how was the day? Six days a week how did he entertain himself and momma who got up at 5 in the morning to start the breakfast, did the wash by hand, kept care of all the children, and was exhausted at the end of the day? I mean how did these people entertain themselves, some way or other. What I remember, having been born in 1915, I'm going to put between the pages of a book and I've already done so on some.
GH: Excuse me, Billy, I want to introduce you to Chief Condon. He is the retired fire chief of San Francisco. You have some photos I’d like you to show Emmett because some of those things you have are really unusual.

BP: Just happen to have one or two. (conversation between friends)

Okay, we were talking about the little fellow. Maybe we better backtrack and see what the last part was.

FQ: Well, what we was talking about was the fact that they worked so long and the days were long and hard and the fact was that they had to have same entertainment. Everybody, even a prisoner, gets entertainment of some sort to make life a little bit livable. So this is what I’m going into now; I wanted to find out exactly how they lived, what they did, and how they entertained themselves. As I recall, in the evenings when my father would come home, and that was about 1920, he’d bring the evening newspaper home with him and after dinner, why, he and my mother would sit in the dining room and that was their entertainment for the evening, reading the evening newspaper. So that was one of the entertainments that they had. Now you’d hardly bring an afternoon paper home. With television and all. But we want to keep ourselves down around 1906 in the period in there. I don’t know how my mother’s family did it. They lived in a four room flat on Bryant Street and see there was her mother and father, my mother, her sister, and three boys, four rooms. Oh yes, and her grandfather was there too until he died shortly after the earthquake and fire. So you can see the number of people crowded together in these places, and I think that was probably typical of the neighborhood, rather than anywhere else—they just didn’t have the money. He was a boilermaker; he never worked steadily
and what little money went in why my grandmother would have to make that dollar stretch as much as she could for food, etc.

BP: With all of the places of employment wiped out, how did the people live, how did they survive?

FQ: The only thing I know about it was kind of comical. You know the soldiers would put any able-bodied man they saw to work, piling bricks or at least cleaning bricks. And my grandfather, although they weren’t supposed to do it, he skulked in the basement of the house and never came out. He wasn’t going to be caught by the military. Not that I can say I blame him very much.

We have one little story among our files I think might interest you too. This young man and young lady were to be married on April 18, and, of course the cataclysm came over and they decided regardless of it all, they were out in the western addition, they were going to get married the next day, the 19th. In the meantime Funston had came in with all his troops, stationed them all around the city and with the city on fire and all why they decided they would wait so they were married about say the 21st or 22nd of April, after the fire had succumbed and when the cleaning process was beginning.

They were married on the sidewalk and they had some champagne, everybody was delighted, etc., and he and his girl or his wife, new wife took off. They were going to the ferry to spend their honeymoon across the Bay. They got so far and they ran into a platoon of people digging and putting up bricks and an armed soldier there, the soldier said to them, "Get to work on the bricks." He said, "Well, I’ve just been married." He said, "I don’t care, get to work an the bricks." So the poor fellow had to take off his
coat, his wife, new wife, bride and all, sat down and waited for him, and he worked I don’t know how many hours, but he was pretty tired when he got finished. The soldier waved him on and they continued on their way to the ferry building, and he happened to run into another work party and this soldier told him to get to work and he explained he had already worked on the other one and he was just married, etc. "Makes no difference," and they were formidable with those rifles and the bayonet on the end of it. So the poor fellow went to work a second time. Then he made the ferry boat. But I don’t think there was much of a honeymoon that night.

BP: It would kind of slow you down.

FQ: We have the story in our files.

BP: What about people from outside coming in to see the damage.

FQ: There were some that came in shortly after the earthquake, after the fire had subsided, and I’m not quite sure whether they were discouraged or not, but they certainly would be in the way. I’m not too sure about that.

BP: What about outside press coverage?

FQ: Well that was done mostly through the local papers. I think that some of them came in. They had their feature writers; for instance Jack London wrote for the newspapers, etc. But I’m not too familiar with them, although I’ve gone through papers of that time—they’re all local papers. Gladys, incidentally, has quite a few of the out-of-town papers, too. I think they probably picked it up on the wire services which they had at that time.

BP: Aren’t those [photographs] marvelous?

FQ: The quality is very good. Usually they’re...
BP: Oh yes, she had a very fine eye. As I have shown these to professional photographers they get very excited about it, and time after time they say, "What an eye this woman had."

EC: They're real good. Have they been published?

BP: No, they have not been published. I'm at the moment working on getting my Master's project done, and then sometime this next year we're going to be putting together a month-long exhibit in the Secured Gallery of the Fine Arts Building at BYU. Shortly after that I imagine we'll be doing something about getting these published. But they were donated to BYU by a very dear friend of mine who is the nephew of the woman who took the pictures, and these glass plates are in perfect condition and they just... There's 60 here of this and there are over 100 of the Electra Project, the hydroelectric plant, and then there are other miscellaneous. But those two groups are what I'm concentrating on as far as my paper is concerned.

EC: What is the subject of your project?

BP: Her.

EC: Her, oh, you're concentrating on her. Is that Edith?

BP: Edith Irvine. The Irvine family was very prominent in the "Moke" Hill/ Jackson area, San Andreas, etc.--all those little communities around there. At one time they were very, very wealthy; they owned a lot of land and quite a few highly-producing mines, etc. But she's a fascinating person.

FQ: Let's see, where were we before...

BP: My next question was...
FQ: Oh yes, it was on journalism. I know very little about that, and I wouldn't give any more than an opinion. But I think it was all done by wire service coming in and out. You know, within a very few years, in 1910 I think it was, we had the Portland Expedition—listen to me, Exposition; there was an expedition too—in San Francisco celebrating the recovery of the city and it was pretty well built up by that time.

BP: How did this recovery come about? Who paid all of the expenses involved?

FQ: That's quite a thing, I think probably a lot of eastern money must have come in because there was great controversy about the insurance policies and I understand some of the companies actually went bankrupt. One of the things was, all these policies had an exclusionary clause that if a building was shaken down, the insurance was null and void. So, a great deal of business was engendered in proving that the buildings were burned rather than destroyed by the earthquake. In fact, some of the insurance companies refused to pay off, others paid high prices for pictures of buildings shaken down by the earthquake, which they could use to refute the owners claim to insurance indemnities. This went on for quite a few years so. In fact, Gladys' new book will go into that a little bit more extensively. I don't know how many years it took to clean that up, but I know that by 1910 the litigation was not complete. Because that takes... that's pretty laborious. So I think it was eastern money poured in from it. For instance James Feeland who owned quite bit of property, now the Feeland Building on Market Street and several other places had his place all insured, but not to the extent necessary to recover so he had to borrow money in order to rebuild, and I think that happened with a great many of the buildings, etc., here. And the businesses too. And one other thing that occurred was the
safes in the burned out areas were red hot. And of course, everything inside was just a
tinder box, and some of the owners, etc., eager to get to their papers, opened up the
safes too early—spontaneous combustion.

BP: Gladys mentioned to me about the fire being found again about a year later when they
started to finish the demolition of one of the major hotels.

FQ: Oh really, I'll have to get a hold of the book on that one. That's new to me too.

BP: I was hoping you might be able to tell us about that.

FQ: No, that's one I'm not quite sure of.

BP: All of these people who stayed here and had lost everything; how did they manage to eat?

FQ: Well, of course, you know during the earthquake and fire, and the aftermath of it, they
were fed by the federal government.

BP: No, I didn't know that.

FQ: Oh yes, there were large, huge places for people to go to find food. In fact, this is kind
of comical, I was going through an old magazine here one day, searching for stories on
the earthquake and fire and I came to a picture of a relief group getting food at Garfield
Square, 26th and Harrison. And I passed over it. Then suddenly a light went on in my
head and I went back again and I looked at the people. There was a man in front and a
woman behind him. I kept looking. It was my mother, of all things. Whoever had
pasted this thing in the book from the magazine used a glue that rippled. Rippled the
picture. And although Pat Acray, who is in charge of photographs here, tried to get a
good picture for me, she just couldn't make it. But there was my mother standing there.
She must have been about 19 at the time, I guess. It's one of the oddities that you get when you research, find things.

BP: What can you tell me about the bacon and eggs fire?

FQ: Well, I was corrected about that recently.

BP: Oh really.

FQ: It's bacon and egg, singular.


FQ: I was using the plural and was corrected, so I correct you in turn. Evidently, they're not quite sure. They think it was a woman who got up very early and started to make breakfast, and the defective flume started it on Hayes Valley across this way at some point, the instrument [recorder] can't show it, but I am pointing. And then it swept all down through here, and the fire department at that time--those people were heroes in the fire department with the way they worked and everything--could not stop it. It just blazed out. St. Ignatious Church, a beautiful place, and college was over on Van Ness Avenue, just right beyond this huge building here, and the fire then broke out and wiped out all this area, coming right back on the south of Market. See the building over here with the false front? That's the Civic Auditorium that was in the Mechanics Pavilion, and it was there that the sick, the injured, and even the dead were brought, and when the bacon and egg fire started why this was first menaced so everyone, the doctors, nurses and all, police department went out and confiscated every car they could find, every horse and wagon and everything else, and evacuated all these people. But they had to leave the dead--they couldn't get them all out on time--so they took out what they could. Nobody
was...the myth was that some of those that could not be taken out that the doctors anesthetized them and the National Guard shot them to death rather than see them burn, but that myth has been exploded so many times, contradicting it gets a little bit tiring. However, that’s the building and that’s the site, and then they were dispersed out to the Persidio, to Fort Mason, several other places in order to get them out of the fire zone.

BP: Did medical help come in from other areas?

FQ: Yes, as much as they could bring them in at that time, because, don’t forget, transportation was a little bit... Two young ladies left some British remarks, one lady left a wonderful narrative which is going to be in Gladys’ book now in the process of being printed. They were nurses and they went to the Mechanics Pavilion, and soldiers were outside. They said they wanted to go in; they were barred. And they said, ”We’re nurses.” Right away the soldiers bayonets went up; they were brought right in. This nurse gives a graphic description of all that went on inside the Mechanics Pavilion. And one of the things that they had...they were giving a great many injections at the time, but in the meantime there was no order to the way these people were laid out on pallets on the floor, and they were liable to be disturbed, one being pushed over here to make room for somebody else brought in, etc. So they devised the idea that when they gave an injection they took a safety pin with a piece of paper on it and they wrote what it was and they pinned it to the patient, so when they came back they knew what was going on with them. Otherwise it was complete chaos. But she’s got some beautiful tales in there, too.

BP: Oh, I’m looking forward to it. Because I had no idea I would ever get involved in anything the way I’m involved in this project.
FQ: It's a fascinating subject. And I'm just unhappy that no one really had the idea of going to people who survived it, years ago, say fifty years ago and get stories from them. There's even gaps in what my mother told me.

BP: Well, this is one of the things I'm running into on this, as I was speaking this last week in the "Moke" Hill area and so on. The person who was the most helpful to me said, "You're ten years too late."

FQ: That's true.

BP: Everybody that could really tell you what you need to know about her is now gone.

FQ: That's it; they're all lying down on the peninsula. In the one-room apartments down there. That's what's so vexing about it when you try to find something, you try to penetrate. That's one of the reasons I want to do some work on my period because people are still alive and I can still talk to them and get all these reactions, and so forth and so on. What they did, how they did it, where was the corner grocer? Now you go into a supermarket...I am reminded of my wife and I, the other day we were out at Lucky Market and I said to her, "Honey, I remember the day when I'd go to the grocery store on the corner and I'd go to the counter and I'd tell the clerk one by one what I wanted, and he would go and fetch it."

BP: Yes. I remember that.

FQ: All that's gone now. Different things that you did...your mother never went to a supermarket, she went to the butcher daily, she had no refrigeration, she went to the grocer, she went to fruit stands, she went to everything, she had a shopping expedition every day.
BP: There are major universities in this area. Do any of these universities and schools have engineering students that make any effort to get involved in this to find out what happened?

FQ: Yes, the University of California is very active. Gladys is working with a great deal of seismologists these days too. In fact, she has sort of a title, I forget what it is, and they have a place in the Palace up in Golden Gate Park now, the science building out there. So she’s working on that too, besides her duties here in the library. Also Chief Condon, to whom you just spoke, is working on seismology, methodology, etc.

BP: What was his name?

FQ: Emmett Condon.

BP: And he’s the fire chief?

FQ: He was a fire chief. Retired. A brainstorm, incidentally, very bright man.

BP: Condon, Con don?

FQ: Yes. It was said of him when he was first on his way up, he went through the ranks by examination, that he could take any paper no matter how involved and reduce it in a few minutes to its nut. You know, just that kind of a mentality.

BP: That’s a real ability.

FQ: Something I never acquired.

BP: Well, we all have our strong points. One way or another.

FQ: My chain had a weak link somewhere there.
BP: Okay, since we are now sitting right here looking out this window at the scene of this thing that we are talking about, what do you as an individual San Franciscan have go through your mind as you look out over here?

FQ: Not a great deal, just the fact that I have some historic places. Do you see the Hotel San Franciscan, right in front of you?

BP: Is that what that is?

FQ: Now that is actually the Hotel Whitcomb, originally it was being built at the time of the earthquake and was completed shortly afterwards, and if you walk over there and stand in front of the main entrance at the curb and look upward beyond the awning or the marquee, you’ll see engraved into the stone the words City Hall. That was our city hall following the earthquake and fire. Not all the departments were lodged there but many of them were. In fact, the mayor had his office there too. The other departments were scattered around different places. The Superior Court was in the synagogue at Webster and California. All their trials were held out there. Everything was just dispersed. But down here we had the city.

BP: Makeshift and make do.

FQ: As much as you could do at the time. And then, thank God, we had a beautiful contest for a new City Hall that was submitted by Blakewell and Brown, two prominent architects at the time, and it was submitted in an air almost of frivolity because it was so beautiful and so expensive, they didn’t think it would ever be accepted, but they put it in. So we have the present City Hall, three million dollars to build it. Probably replaceable by a couple of billion today. Have you ever been in it?
BP: No, I haven't.

FQ: Oh, go in someday and just look at the main foyer and the grand staircase and all of it. It's in good taste. I've been to Europe quite a few times and I've seen some of their beautiful buildings and they are beautiful. But I'll compare San Francisco to any of them. Just try it sometime. Some afternoon go over and browse. You know one thing, I'm really deviating too much on this, but one thing I think that would be well staged in there by a motion picture company, "Hamlet." Go over and see if that isn't Elsinore. And the bottom of the grand staircase where the dueling scene takes place at the end of the play. Just see what you think. And then go upstairs and wander about the corridors, and you'll see what I mean; it could have the ghost coming right in there of Hamlet's father.

BP: Okay, we mentioned about engineering students in the universities in the area; does the general public come in to do any reading about the early San Francisco? Are you aware of any specific interest?

FQ: Oh yes, we have them in all the time. But mostly as you said, specific interest rather than general interest. They want to know where grandpa lived at a certain time, or like that. I've got a couple of trays of letters of inquiry on different things. One thing was kind of odd--this was not quite the earthquake and fire, but in the general history--I received a letter from Wyoming from a woman named Suzanne Gossi Stevens and she wanted to know if we knew anything about an Ambrose D'Aussi, who lived in San Francisco somewhere, that she was related and was part of a family. It came to me. I'm related to the D'Aussi's.

BP: Small world.
FQ: So I was able to give her the information; otherwise, she would have had to have a professional because Ambrose D'Aussi never cut any swath in society or anything like that--he worked for a living. But it was odd that the letter would arrive in my possession.

BP: Obviously this disaster was a major one. Were there any important lessons learned that were later put to good use?

FQ: I'm afraid the lessons learned were not put to good use. The city was built too hastily afterwards, and I think that some of the building codes which should have been very, very strong were ignored and now in the south of Market area, which is a filled-in area, some of those buildings are in deplorable state. Also, the little alleys down there should have been eliminated too. People living in those alleys still; I don't think it's a good place for them to live. But it was built hastily, and they were all set to get back on normal living again, just what we always do, banish the thoughts of yesterday. So I don't think they built well. Some of the larger buildings were built with the idea of earthquake-proofing at the time, but I'll have to see the next time whether they were true or false.

BP: In other parts of the country it seems to be that it is not a matter of if San Francisco will shake again, but just simply a question of when. Do the local people feel that way about it?

FQ: No, you never think when you're sitting on any kind of disaster that it's going to occur to you, always to the other fellow. And if we broaden those terms, why we'd be living in perpetual fear all our lives. So I think the subconscious of all of us just blots those things out. I never think of it; my wife never thinks of it. Her parents went through the earthquakes and fires, she's well versed in its history, and my sister, none of us think of
it, you know. If you did... I once heard a man who said that "If all of us knew the date and hour of our death, we'd live in fear."

BP: That's very true, yes.

FQ: And that's just about what we're doing right here. We don't know it, so it's blanked out. When we go we won't be aware of anything anyhow.

BP: So actually outsiders are much more interested in prognostication than the localites?

FQ: My son was in the Marine Corps during Vietnam, and while he was there he met a doctor, a very good friend of his (they were both commissioned officers), and when the doctor got out of the Marine Corps, my son said, "Why don't you come and live in San Francisco? You can build a practice here; you're already licensed, etc." He said, "Oh no, earthquakes, I'm afraid of them." So he's in Chicago where every now and then he writes how he had to dig himself out in the snow, etc., and there hasn't been a major earthquake since they got out. So you can see the fear of some people of earthquakes. We've been through them. The last pretty good one we had, why my little grandson was home alone and I phoned him to see how he was and I said, "What did you do, Bryan, when the earth shook?" He said, "Well, grabbed the cat and I ran under the doorway."

BP: Are any efforts made by the local government, or whatever should take care of it, for emergency preparedness?

FQ: Yes, we have a disaster corp in San Francisco. How active it is I'm not too sure.

BP: If a young person, we'll say 10 to 12, were to come in and come up to you and say, "You're an old-timer here in San Francisco, tell me about the earthquake." What would you tell someone of that age group?
FQ: Oh, first of all I would reduce myself to eliminate a great deal of technical jargon, and just simply tell them about what happened during those times. What old-timers told me, what I told them, etc. That’s the only way you could do with a little one like that, at that age. I think that would be the better approach.

BP: All right, suppose we’re talking about a high school junior.

FQ: I’ve had them come in and I generally in that kind of a case, I say, now you question me. So they bring up the subjects rather than my trying to bring it out to them. And they’re generally very good too. I’ve had several of them interview me.

BP: A teacher comes in and says, "What can you tell me that I can pass on to my children in my classes to help them be aware that this was a major event in our country’s history?"

FQ: Once again I would do it on the question and answer, with this proviso, I would also point out certain books for her to read.

BP: Such as?

FQ: Such as San Francisco Mission to Metropolis, different books on the earthquake and fire-I’m trying to think of some of the titles, but there are recent books on it--and I probably will give her Gladys Hansen’s new book coming out now, in order that she get a background on it. You know these backgrounds just don’t appear spontaneously overnight; they have to be studied for months...

BP: That’s right.

FQ: …and sometimes years before you really get a touch into it. But that is what I would do-I would refer her to books. And then if she wanted to interview me again to amplify
anything or to get an opinion on it or an explanation, come on along. In fact, I get telephone calls at night too on it.

BP: Welcome to the club. I teach many people from all over the country pertaining to taking care of their family photographs, and it is not at all unusual for me to get a phone call at 11:30 at night.

FQ: We get them.

BP: Okay, now as you go back in your mind on the things that we have mentioned here today, is there anything in particular that you think we should be sure to include on this to have a well-rounded report on it.

FQ: Yes, human interest stories.

BP: By all means, yes.

FQ: As many as you can get of that, I think that’s the most important thing of all. We can go through statistics and we can also go through the time in which the earthquake [and fire] was fought, etc, but when we come to the human interest then you’re speaking of the human being and you’re getting more of a flavor than you would get otherwise.

BP: That’s what I’m after, yes.

FQ: I would not ignore it either, and I would go in heavily to the Fire Department of San Francisco, and I’ll use a very 19th-century word, their heroic work. I think they did a marvelous job and I’ve got more than a passing interest because I have a battalion chief who is a grand-uncle of mine, Michael O’Brien, who went through it. And my son, today, is a captain in the fire department. But I would. They were so exhausted that
they'd just lay down on the cobblestones and sleep as much as they could, grab some
sleep, then get up and be pursued again and there was a question of eating.

There is one little story told, I think Gladys Hansen's book will bring in this
incident, these three firemen were sitting on some of the ruins with the fire not too far
away from them and they had opened up cans of tuna and they were busy devouring it
when somebody came along, I don't know who it was, and excoriated them for not
fighting the fire. They said they had been fighting it for two days and now they wanted
to eat, and you could see that they needed the nourishment and the rest too. And there's
certain other things, you know; there are certain body functions. How did they work that
out? These things are very, very important. And another thing was these firemen put on
these rubber raincoats when they were using a hose, but the intensity of the fire sometimes
stuck the hose to their skin. They had some very bad, hard times. But I think the fire
department...of course, I'm biased; I admit it.

BP: Well, that's all right; that's fine.

FQ: Somebody has got to do it. But I would go into that and I would go into stories of
the...Gladys Hansen has a great many stories. There was a fireman, Captain Cullen, for
instance died at the age of 92, but he was a young man in 1906 and he tells a graphic
story. And she's got other stories by firemen. Where would they look for water? Some
of them went right down into the sewers, plunging their hoses down it, and sucked out
what water they could only to find out that there was too much sand that had penetrated
the sewer. They couldn't get any water. Different things, how on 20th Street, right
towards the very end when they found an operating hydrant, this is quite a hill and they
had two steamers with horses. Horses were to exhausted to bring the steamers up the hill. Finally they got a mob of men and they got behind the steamer with the horses and pushed them up that way. So you can see how bad it was too. And the tiredness and the weariness. I guess that the juices weren't flowing after the first day to keep them going.

BP: Yes, somehow we do need to replenish our supply from time to time.

FQ: So we just hope that in the next one, if there be a next one, that we have enough water. But one of the great things that's going to happen in the next one that is going to be so bad is the amount of glass that will shatter and will be thrown onto the streets. And this way, you better have some strong shoes because there will just be shards and shards of glass. Are you aware of the Bank of America building here in San Francisco?

BP: No.

FQ: It is a huge structure, probably one of the tallest, if not the tallest in the city, and practically all glass all the way up. Now if that... I should have brought Emmett to tell you that. If that's shaken badly by an earthquake and those windows shatter, those shards will go as far as two blocks--two city blocks--and they'll be strong and they will be penetrating and they're liable to kill people just by one through the chest or something like that. It's going to be quite a problem when it does occur, if it ever does occur. Let's hope it doesn't.

BP: Well naturally that's our hope, but we do need to face the reality of the possibility.

FQ: So stay inside. I guess you'd be safer inside than outside with all that shattering glass. And let's hope if it does happen it happens about three in the morning, before the people come in. We were lucky at five o'clock in the morning the last time.
BP: Yes, it was my understanding that if this had happened later, as much as just a half hour later, the death toll would have been far more.

FQ: Far higher, yes. Men had not yet started to go to work. Usually leave their homes at 5:30 in those days and get to work by about 6:00. They would walk, so they stay with their families; some were killed with their families. But any how, it would be better if it happened at night.

BP: That I understand was one of the reasons why there was such horrendous disaster in the big deal in Russia was because it was during the day, the kids were all in school, and the factory workers were all in the factories, etc.

FQ: One other thing was the shoddy construction of those buildings. Even if it had of been at night with the buildings in that bad of condition, why these families would have been wiped out. They’d been sleeping inside the house, so I don’t know whether the death toll would be greater at night or daytime. Same thing in Mexico, Mexico City Quake, bad construction. That’s one thing we can be thankful for today; we have a pretty alert Bureau of Public Works Department making them toe the mark. There’s one garage built downtown--I think it was the 5th and Market garage; I can be corrected on that--but when the inspectors went there if they had laid two floors of concrete reinforced, made them tear out the two floors; they were not strong enough. Of course the contractor was a little bit put out about it, but he threw them out. And that’s the only way you can do it--you have to be severe; you have no friends when it comes to that.
BP: Would you consider the San Francisco earthquake the worst one that we know about, that we are allowed any information on? I understand that there have been at least two in the heart of China, but the general public never learned about them.

FQ: You never know anything about it. I think ours has been pretty well diagnosed if you use a word like that, as to the why's, when's, how's, etc., and to the lessons taught from it. It was one that--thank goodness we had telegraphic communication those days so that word went out; it wasn't isolated as others have been. I think it is a good case study.

BP: Is there a transportation network around the perimeter of the city so that at least other than in the heart of the city there will be a method of escape?

FQ: I don't think there will be any method of escape. I think you'll just be confined within the city. First of all, we can't depend on the Golden Gate Bridge; that will go down, and it's so constructed incidentally that if it does go down it goes down in pieces so that it won't jam the harbor. And as for the Bay Bridge that will be shaken too. Imagine a population trying to get out of San Francisco over that bridge.

BP: I can't begin to imagine.

FQ: It would just be ridiculous. The trend, if any, and if it's possible will be down the peninsula, and the peninsula will be a portion of the shaken area. During the 1906 the peninsula was very lightly built up. I remember as a kid going between the various communities on the peninsula. We'd go to Palo Alto and then there'd be a gap until we got to this town and a gap until we got to another. Now there's no gap--they just flow on one after the other.

BP: Okay, anything else you can think of?
FQ: No, I think that pretty well covered everything.

BP: Well, I am so grateful for your...

FQ: Oh, you're welcome, Billy. Any time I can help you let me know.

BP: This is just marvelous and I'm just sure my one teacher in particular is going to be delighted. Frank Fox is on our faculty at BYU. San Francisco is his specialty, and I'm taking his course now. In fact I'm playing hooky from his class right now to be here. When I said, "I'm going to go to San Francisco. What must I do?" He said, "Find somebody who can sit down and talk with you about it."

FQ: Oh, that was good.

BP: Well thank you so much.

FQ: Oh, you're welcome, Billy.

There was a poem that was sung a lot:

On a Wednesday morn
at the break of dawn
San Francisco felt a shock
There were cries of dread
as they jumped from bed
and each house began to rock.
Then the cry of fire
from the coast rose higher
their fair city was aflame.
Grim death it was near
as they stood in fear
when I say this can you blame?

BP: And this was written by?

FQ: Oh it's just a spontaneous poem.

BP: Written by a fellow named Frank Quinn?
FQ: No, no, they sang it to the tune of "Wait Till the Sun Shines Nellie." And then it goes on:

Wait till the sun shines San Francisco by and by
eastbound trains and out west would fly.

I never did get the rest of it.

BP: Well, thank you.
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