Disasters, Accidents, and Crises in American History: A Reference Guide to the Nation's Most Catastrophic Events (Facts on File Library of American History)

Ballard Campbell

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Disasters, accidents, and crises have profoundly shaped American history - from the "starving time" at Jamestown, the smallpox epidemic during the Revolutionary War, and the "year without a summer" in 1816 to the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, the San Francisco earthquake, and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Not only have these catastrophic events upended lives and wreaked untold havoc, they have often transformed society, demarcating one era from another and generating vast social change.Broadly defined to encompass a huge array of events that have shocked the country, altered American life, and shaped the nation's consciousness, "Disasters, Accidents, and Crises in American History" provides a thrilling and informative account of U.S. history that will appeal to students, teachers, and general readers alike.Presented chronologically, this comprehensive reference covers more than 200 of the most significant life-altering disasters from 1492 to the present, including hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, fires, massacres, riots, assassinations, rebellions, shipwrecks, collisions, epidemics, plagues, depressions, explosions, tornadoes, blizzards, poisonings, scandals, bombings, bridge collapses, dam failures, environmental calamities, and much, much more. Written in narrative form and signed by leading historians, each article features a fact box highlighting the major details of the event and an engaging "you-are-there" format, which allows readers a firsthand look at people living through the experience. The historical background and context of each disaster, accident, or crisis is explored, as well as the cause and first moment of the event, the immediate and long-range response, and its lasting impact and enduring legacy. This illustrated reference includes a number of helpful reference features, such as cross-references, a bibliography, an index, and an appendix with numerous tables. Sidebars focus on the development of disaster response, such as the creation of the National Weather Service, FEMA, and public health agencies.

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