

## WAY BACK WHEN



The **San Andreas Fault** is probably the most famous fault line in the world. Marking the boundary between the North American and Pacific tectonic plates, it runs 1,300 kilometers up the California coast, from the Imperial Valley, 150 miles east of Los Angeles, through San Francisco, and up to the Oregon border.

The fault has been responsible for a number of memorable earthquakes. On October 17, 1989, the San Francisco Giants and Oakland A's were warming up for Game 3 of baseball's World Series when an earthquake measuring 6.9 on the

Richter scale hit. Known afterward as the "Loma Prieta earthquake," the event left more than 12,000 people homeless. The 1994 Northridge earthquake, which measured 6.7, struck the heavily populated San Fernando Valley and caused \$12 billion in damages.

Worst of all, though, was the quake that shook northern California on April 18, 1906 (pictured). It occurred before the Richter scale was developed, but most seismologists believe it registered somewhere between 7.7 and 8.3. Some 80 percent of the city of San Francisco was destroyed by the quake and the out-of-control fires that raged afterward. More than 3,000 people died, and between 200,000 and 300,000 people—out of a population of 410,000—were left homeless. Damages were estimated at \$400 million (\$6.5 billion in today's dollars), and the city of San Francisco, which at the time was the largest city on the West Coast, was never the same.