MORE ON APRIL 26, 1981 WESTMORLAND (CA) EARTHQUAKE


The lower photograph on page 90 of the newsletter is not a picture of portico (arcade) damage caused by the earthquake. Rather, the portico over the sidewalk had been knocked down by demolition crews the afternoon of April 26. Earthquake shaking severely damaged the portico and loosened it from the remainder of the building, but final collapse was induced by demolition crews. City officials thought the portico too dangerous to leave standing. An official in the Brawley Building Inspection Office confirmed that this building was still standing after the earthquake occurred—damage was confined to the rear part and east wall of the building. Enclosed is a series of photographs (photo 1) taken April 26, 1981, showing actual razing of the portico (photos courtesy of Paul Noden, Imperial Valley Press). More information concerning this building can be found in the April 27, 1981, edition of the Imperial Valley Press on pages one and six.

The top photograph on page 91 also is not a photo of actual earthquake damage. That building sustained damage from earthquake shaking but did not collapse. Chaffin and Sinkeldam's photo shows the building in an initial state of demolition. Actual earthquake damage is shown in the enclosed photograph (photo 2) taken April 26, 1981, (photo courtesy of Paul Noden, Imperial Valley Press). The damage consisted of pillars, which supported the second story over the sidewalk, tilted outwards toward the street, separating at a structural joint just east of the northwest corner of the building. This building is also described in the April 27, 1981, edition of the Imperial Valley Press.

An evaluation of Modified Mercalli Intensities resulting from the Westmorland earthquake is currently in progress.

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Photo 1.—Buildings at 231, 239, and 241 West Main Street being demolished (photo courtesy of Paul Noden, Imperial Valley Press).

Photo 2.—Porter's Fountain building as it appeared shortly after the earthquake, before demolition began. The building was on the southeast corner of F and Main streets. View is looking south from the north side of Main (photo courtesy of Paul Noden, Imperial Valley Press).