



Krakatau 1883, The Volcanic Eruption and Its Effects

Tom Simkin, Richard S. Fiske

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Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 11 inches tall, 464 pages. Bibliography, index. Includes several black and white illustrations, plus a few color plates. Also includes maps and a detailed chronology. Excerpt from the preface: We undertook, in the centennial year of Krakatau's 1883 eruption, a harder look at this classic benchmark event in the history of volcanology. Like most linguistically crippled, English-speaking geologists, our knowledge of Krakatau came from the obligatory descriptions in textbooks, supplemented by a few scattered papers and the famous Royal Society report of 1888. The latter, while containing many marvelous eyewitness accounts of distant effects, carried no first-person reports of the eruption. In hopes of finding more information, we visited the Royal Society and, with their generous permission and help, photographed many hundreds of newspaper clippings letters, and reports from their archives. Some of this material appears in Part II of this book, but it has been supplemented by library research here, particularly at the Library of Congress, National Archives, U.S. Geological Survey, and our own Smithsonian Library. As we learned more about the eruption, we soon recognized the importance of the monograph published by Verbeek in 1885. This impressively scholarly and timely work is filled with valuable information, but only Verbeek's short preliminary report, translated in *Nature* in mid-1884, seems to have been read by most English-speaking writers. We therefore set about obtaining the translations from this important monograph that appear in Part II of this books. Finally, we recognized that most readers would be interested in subsequent attempts to explain the various phenomena observed. Many of these accounts are out of print, or otherwise difficult to obtain, so we have selected several interpretive accounts and reprinted them as Part IV of this book.

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