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Historic Catalog
1434-93-G-2323 A.I. Qamar, P.I.

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Jan. 1, 1993 - Sept. 30, 1993

We are compiling an improved catalog of historic felt and damaging earthquakes in Washington and Oregon based on existing earthquake catalogs, contemporaneous newspaper clippings, diary entries, articles in scientific journals, and other available information. Our new catalog takes advantage of powerful relational-data base features to store extensive information on each event and to allow the user to view the information in various ways; from a single-line summary to a complete report including all known sources of information for an earthquake. Currently we are entering and tabulating a large volume of data already collected, searching for additional data, and developing data-base tools to facilitate construction of the catalog.

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Investigations

We are compiling an improved catalog of historic felt and damaging earthquakes in Washington and Oregon based on existing earthquake catalogs (published or unpublished), supplemented by contemporaneous newspaper clippings, diary entries, references to articles in scientific journals, and other available information. Our new catalog takes advantage of powerful relational data-base features to store extensive information on each event and to allow the user to view the information in various ways; from a single-line summary to a complete report including all known sources of information for an earthquake.

Our catalog is being constructed using a PC data-base product. For each cataloged earthquake, the data-base will also contain a "scrapbook" of original source materials. The first step in constructing the catalog has been to enter existing catalogs, newspaper clippings, etc. into the "scrapbook". As we create the scrapbook we index the material by tabulating as much specific information as possible from each source (date, location, etc.). This tabulation is used to help us to identify sources of information for each earthquake. After reviewing the various sources, we select the best information to create the improved and more comprehensive catalog of historic earthquakes in Washington and Oregon.

Progress

During this contract period, we acquired a PC and data-base software. Because we had developed the data base design earlier, our objectives were well defined; beginning with data entry, and proceeding through tabulation, compilation of information by earthquake date and time, and ending with the selection of the best available magnitude, time, location, and depth for each event. The major concentration so far has been entering and tabulating data. We have also been developing tools that allow us to view the data in ways which facilitate each step of the procedure, and which check for various types of errors. Currently we have entered and tabulated most existing catalogs, and a sizable volume of newspaper and periodical accounts which we have collected over some years. We have also reviewed additional newspaper indices and original data sources, such as microfilmed copies of the original handwritten comments of weather observers, to see whether additional information can be gleaned.