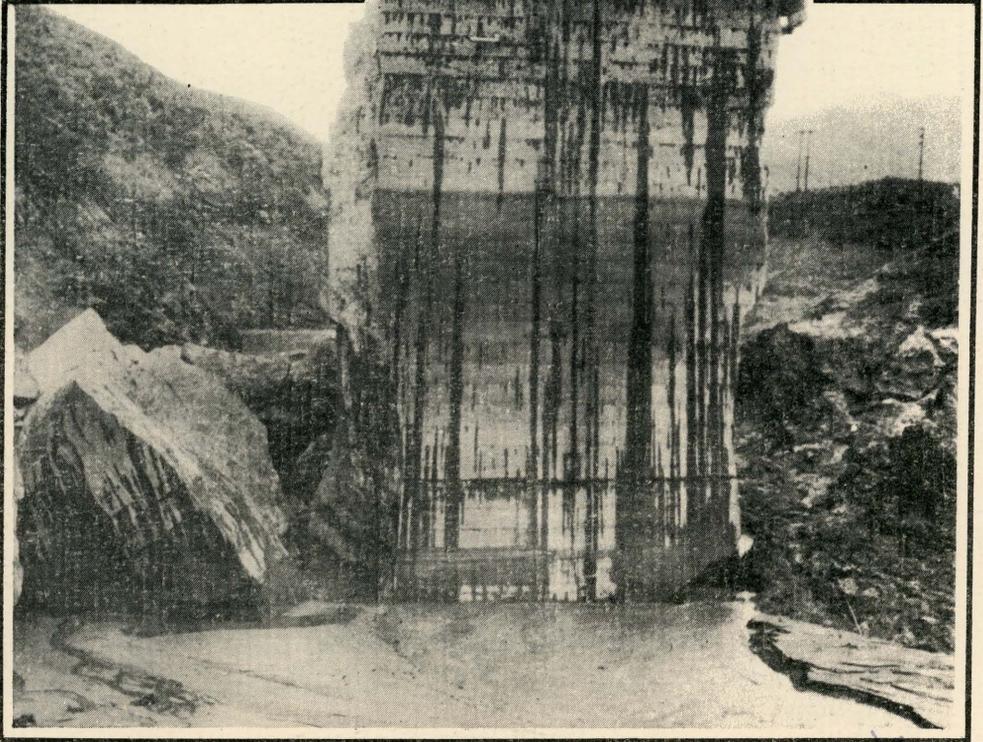


photo by George R. Watson



# St. Francis Dam disaster memorial dinner

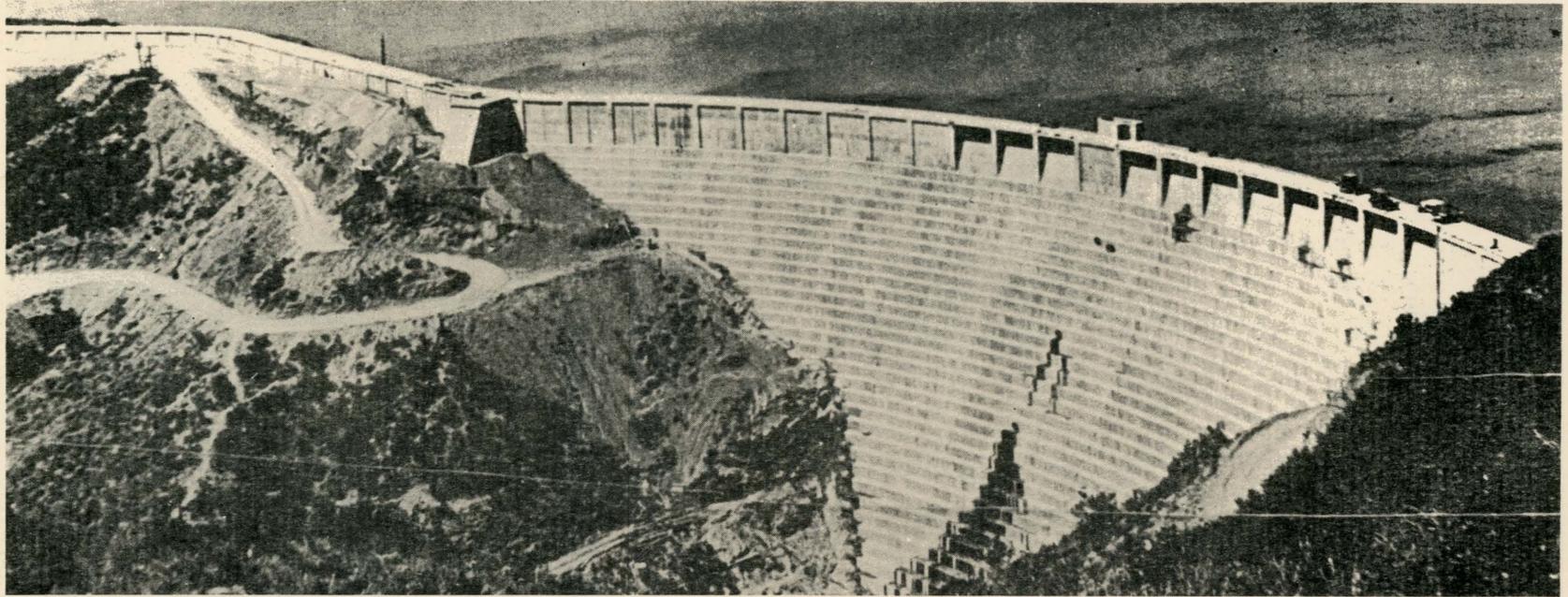
March 12, 1978  
Ranch House Inn  
Valencia, CA

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Smith  
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(Book)*

Early in 1928, Los Angeles Times photographer George R. Watson was inspired by the massive St. Francis Dam and the tranquil waters of the reservoir beyond. He could not have imagined then that he would soon return to record the horrible aftermath of Southern California's worst disaster, including the cover photo of the monolith which stood like a memorial tombstone for the hundreds who lost their lives.

photos courtesy of  
Watson Family Archives



**O**N A STILL MARCH NIGHT in 1928, most of the residents of San Francisquito Canyon, Santa Clarita Valley and the Santa Clara River Valley had gone to sleep. Only a handful of the proverbial night people — the telephone operators, policemen and utility employees — were awake as midnight approached.

They were the first ones to hear, feel and finally see the thunderous hell that had been unleashed upon them. Others were jolted from their sleep and swept away in the churning deluge.

The more fortunate were given at least some advance notice by sirens, barking dogs or loved ones. They barely had enough time to scramble to higher ground and shiver in the darkness until the dawn unveiled an unimaginable scene of destruction. Monday, March 12, 1928, would be the last time the survivors would see many of their loved ones, their homes and, at best, the way things used to be.

Fifty years later we gather in honor of the more than 400 who lost their lives and were spared the scene on that morning after.

Lest we forget.

## Program

- 1-2:30 Reception for survivors and guests in banquet room of the Ranch House Inn.
- 2:30 Invocation/Rev. Raymond P. Smith  
Memorial dinner.
- 3:30 Welcoming remarks/Prof. William S. Thomas  
Presentations/Don Ray, memorial dinner host  
Introductions, historical account, video program and special recognitions by California Highway Patrol and Los Angeles County.  
Bell rededication and group picture will follow presentations.

2624 Citronella Court

Simi Valley 93063

93063

Sat at the Table

Mamie  
Pres.  
Historical - San Clara  
Society Valley

Edwards - on motorcycle -  
Warning People

Independent Historic Document  
Film Co.

The St. Francis Dam Memorial gathering is a historical event in its own right. It also presents a unique opportunity for those who vividly recall a major event of the past to share their memories with others. In order to preserve those recollections for future generations, we are preparing a collection of your personal accounts and photographs.

We appreciate the tremendous interest many of you have already shown in this project, and encourage everyone else to participate, too. We hope to have the book completed this year and will contact you when it becomes available.

Thank you again.

*Don Ray*  
Don Ray

*William S. Thomas*  
William S. Thomas

*Sto & Steen*