THE MYSTERY: SOLVED

U.S. Disasters and History
• Many have argued that to understand why we experience emergencies, disasters, and catastrophes in the United States
  
  • *how* we do,
  • *when* we do,
  • *and to the extent* we do,

• we need to first understand some key developments over the course of history...
The Reformation...connected
The Reformation

- Disentanglement of religion and knowledge
- Decreasing power of the church
- Rise of Protestantism (Calvinism, Lutheranism)
- Dominance in United States
- Underlying beliefs
  - Nature
  - Accumulation of wealth
Treaty of Westphalia...connected
Treaty of Westphalia

- Nation States
- Boundaries, borders,
  - Hazards,
  - People, and
  - Government.
The Enlightenment...connected
The Enlightenment

- Role of reason and rationalization
- Empirical observation and scientific inquiry as the foundation for knowledge
Can you connect...
The Bill of Rights and Representative Democracy...connected
Bill of Rights

- Paradox of protection FROM government
- Life, liberty, and property
- Speech and press—1\textsuperscript{st} Amendment
- Eminent domain—5\textsuperscript{th} Amendment
- Power of states—10\textsuperscript{th} Amendment
Representative Democracy

- Distance between people and representatives
- Elections and election cycles
- Short-term mentality
Federalism

- Separation of powers
- Checks and balances
- Fragmentation of law and culture
Capitalism,
Trade,
Labor Market and Specialization, and
Globalization...connected
Capitalism

- Short-term vs. long-term investment
- Use of environment
- Development patterns
- Rich v. poor
Trade

- Trade in early United States history
- Trade today
- Where we live
- Market vulnerabilities
Labor Markets and Specialization

- Vulnerabilities
- Decreasing diversity in economies
Globalization

- Interdependencies
- Unequal distribution of among other things--vulnerability
The Industrial Revolution...connected
Industrial Revolution

- Mechanization
- Need for and building of infrastructure
- Rapid development of technology without knowledge of inherent risks
- Creation of new hazards
Urbanization...connected
Urbanization

- Dense population in small geographical areas
- Places large groups of people at risk
- Some geographical areas more at risk than others
- Within urban areas some groups are more at risk than others... (any thoughts on who might be included in these groups?)
Putting It All Together

- These key developments in Western Civilization and in the U.S. may seem abstract, but...
- they contribute to how we experience disasters when, where, and to the extent we do today.
In a Nutshell

- A nation driven by capitol, short-term mindset, and use of nature
- Government in a Catch-22 situation (people/federalism)
- Representatives not oriented to long term issues
- Ability to act limited by scientific knowledge at the time
- Difficulty in standardization
- Vulnerable politics and economy
In a Nutshell

- People live in dangerous places
- Disasters here or abroad can effect both here and abroad
- Deteriorating infrastructure
- Continual creation of new hazards
- Increasing numbers of people in close proximity