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Stories from a Heated Earth

Exciting New Publication Details Our Geothermal Heritage Through the Ages and Around the World

A new and exciting book is hot off the press—with a fresh but timeless topic—the history of mankind living on a geothermal planet. Published by the Geothermal Resources Council and the International Geothermal Association, *Stories from a Heated Earth, Our Geothermal Heritage*, is neither a science text nor a technical treatise. Instead, its focus is on people, and how geothermal phenomena have affected cultures around the world.

Stories from a Heated Earth was painstakingly compiled and edited by Raffaele Cataldi (geothermal consultant-Italy), Susan Hodgson (California Division of Oil, Gas & Geothermal Resources) and John Lund (Oregon Institute of Technology Geo-Heat Center). Created to collect, preserve, interpret and distribute global geothermal history prior to the Industrial Revolution, the 588-page volume with 215 photographs and illustrations is a unique amalgamation of both fact and fiction—true and imaginary accounts of our geothermal heritage unlike anything ever published before.

Covering more than 25 countries, this beautifully crafted paperback book is written in an easy, nontechnical style designed for broad appeal. The 47 international authors of *Stories from a Heated Earth* found the historical information presented by this superb volume in the works of archaeologists, historians, geographers, anthropologists, scientists and engineers. Inspiration flowed from artists, photographers, poets, philosophers, and literary figures—with geothermal quotations from Chinese and Japanese poets, Homer, Shakespeare, Pushkin, Herman Melville, Mark Twain and Edgar Allan Poe.

In addition, *Stories from a Heated Earth* derives interesting tales and practices from ancient manuscripts and the oral tra-

dition, never before recorded. And antique quotations in over 30 languages were extracted for the book from pottery, drawings, maps, votive statues, shrines, stelae, myths and legends. All contribute to the fascinating reading offered within the covers of this engrossing, “must have” addition to both geothermal and historical libraries.

From the dawn of history, people have been entranced by the wonder and benefits of geothermal manifestations. Prehistoric tribes and civilizations in antiquity considered the “Fire of the Earth” as a gift bestowed

by the gods for the benefit of mankind. Hot springs and fumaroles were described as *Wakan Tanka* (“Great Mystery”) by the American Dakota Sioux, and as *tapu* (“sacred”) by the Maori. These beliefs, expressed in popular customs, traditions, religious feelings and rituals, were handed down through hundreds of generations and still influence our customs and thought today.

With their awe-inspiring beauty and sometimes destructive power forever commanding our attention, volcanoes have inspired religious practises, provided fertile

Stories from a Heated Earth

Our Geothermal Heritage



Raffaele Cataldi, Susan F. Hodgson, John W. Lund, Editors

soils for farming, and rock for buildings and tools. A drawing from a neolithic village in Turkey dated at 6200 B.C. shows multi-story rectangular homes flanking an erupting volcano—lava, tuff and volcanic bombs flying from the crater. But time and again people returned to the looming slopes, as they do today, for the good offered by the Earth's fire overwhelms the bad.

Does soaking in thermal water cure illness? Through time immemorial, people around the world have thought so. With little more to guide them than curiosity and their own experiences, people from Asia and Africa to Europe and the Americas have bathed in hot springs to alleviate arthritis, rheumatism, psoriasis and leprosy. Many North American Indian Tribes—including those at The Geysers in northern California—retained health-giving hot springs as neutral ground, open to the use of all.

Thermo-mineral muds collected for skin care through the millennia from the edges of hot springs and other geothermal features now sell for high prices at beauty counters in exclusive stores for the same purposes. Pumice, always used for though cleansing, is still sold commercially as a skin abrasive and a key ingredient in “extra-strength” soaps.

At Chaudes-Aigues in the heart of France, the world's first geothermal district heating system started up in the 14th century and is still going strong. *Stories from a Heated Earth* highlights old tax records, pipe making and distribution methods, legal disputes, and the great success of this project started so long ago. The Icelandic chapter laments that early Nordic settlers on the island did not use geothermal resources in the same way, suffering unnecessarily for centuries in cold, unheated houses.

With these and other highlights, *Stories from a Heated Earth* is an historical guide to our geothermal world. Turning from an exquisite painting on the cover of a small boy gazing at Japan's Mount Fuji, the book embarks on its journey of our geothermal globe with an essay on Easter Island, then spans the world, ending in the final chapter among the peaks of the Andes in South America. Coming full-circle, the book's inside back cover brings the reader once again to Easter Island, the most isolated inhabited island on Earth—and one with a rich geothermal heritage.

Stories from a Heated Earth offers a fascinating journey through time, focused on the cultural influences of geothermal phenomena on the peoples of the world. As you open the book for the first time, its authors and editors hope you will enjoy the trip.

Order Form

Stories from a Heated Earth — Our Geothermal Heritage

Edited by Raffaele Cataldi, Susan Hodgson and John Lund

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Geothermal Resources Council

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