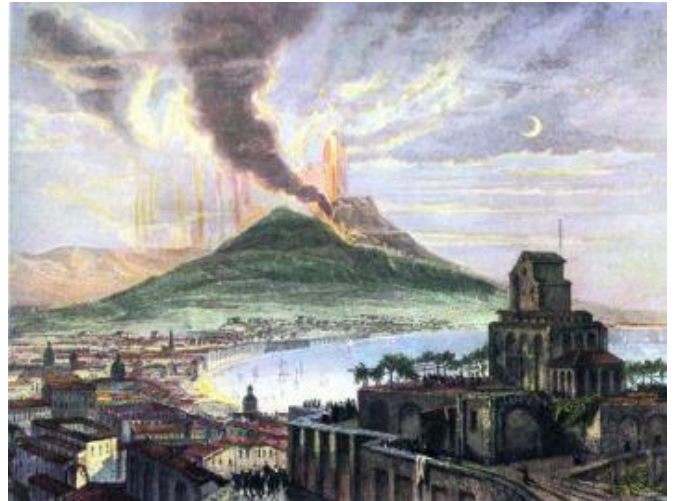


POMPEII

The city of Pompeii was a major resort city during the times of Ancient Rome. However, in 79 AD, disaster struck the city when it was buried under 20 feet of ash and debris from the eruption of the nearby volcano, Mount Vesuvius.

The City

The city of Pompeii was a popular vacation destination for the Romans. It is estimated that between 10,000 and 20,000 people lived in the city. Many wealthy Romans had summer homes in Pompeii and would live there during the hot summer months.



Pompeii was a typical Roman city. On one side of the city was the forum. It was here that much of the business of the city was carried out. There were also temples to Venus, Jupiter, and Apollo near the forum. An aqueduct carried water into the city to be used in the public baths and fountains. The rich even had running water in their homes.

The people of Pompeii enjoyed their entertainment. There was a large amphitheater that could seat around 20,000 people for gladiator games. There were also a number of theatres for plays, religious celebrations, and musical concerts.



The Volcano Erupts

On August 24, 79 AD Mount Vesuvius erupted. Scientists estimate that 1.5 million tons of ash and rock shot out of the volcano every second. The ash cloud likely towered over 20 miles high above the mountain. Some people managed to

escape, but most didn't. It is estimated that 16,000 people died.

Did they know what was coming?

The days prior to the eruption were recorded by a Roman administrator named Pliny the Younger. Pliny wrote that there had been several earthquakes in the days leading up to the eruption, but Roman science didn't know that earthquakes could signal the start of a volcano erupting. Even when they first saw smoke rising from the top of the mountain, they were merely curious. They had no idea what was coming until it was too late.



A Great Archeologists Find

The city of Pompeii was buried and gone. People eventually forgot about it. It wasn't discovered again until the 1700s when archeologists began to uncover the city. They found something amazing. Much of the city was preserved under the ashes. Buildings, paintings, houses, and workshops that would never have survived all these years remained intact. As a result, much of what we know about everyday life in the Roman Empire comes from Pompeii.



Interesting Facts about the City of Pompeii

- The eruption occurred one day after the religious festival to Vulcan, the Roman god of fire.
- The amount of energy released by the eruption was roughly one hundred thousands times the thermal energy released by the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.
- The nearby city of Herculaneum was also destroyed.
- Archeologists found holes in the ashes that were once the bodies of people that were buried in the eruption. By pouring plaster into these holes, scientists have been able to make detailed casts of many of the citizens of Pompeii.
- The recovered city of Pompeii is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Italy.
- The city was located around 5 miles from Mount Vesuvius.

Bibliography

http://www.ducksters.com/history/ancient_rome/pompeii.php



1. Why was the city of Pompeii popular among Romans?
2. What happened that destroyed the city of Pompeii?
3. Around how many people died in the eruption?