

The Call to Remember

Newsletter - Vol. III No. 1

EASTLAND DISASTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Jan/Feb 2001

GREAT NEWS!

We are increasing the frequency of our newsletter from quarterly to bi-monthly. You will now receive **The Call To Remember** six times per year!

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

The Chicago Chapter of the American Red Cross had established its offices in Chicago less than one month prior to the Eastland Disaster. The tragedy was less than an hour old when John J. O'Connor, Director of the Central Division of the American Red Cross, was at work at the scene of the tragedy. Within a few hours, Ernest P. Bicknell, National Director of the American Red Cross, was making his way from national headquarters in Washington, D.C. to Chicago.



American Red Cross
of Greater Chicago

The City of Chicago called upon the American Red Cross to take charge of the Eastland Disaster relief work, and the American Red Cross responded. Discover how incredible their response was in the new "American Red Cross" section available on our web site. See *"the hours and days that followed"* located at www.eastlanddisaster.org/disaster.htm. This new section describes: the relief work that was conducted at the scene; the emergency relief that was provided for the hundreds of families in need; a list of those who contributed to the relief fund and how it was administered and distributed to the families; and how much was paid out in relief, death, disability and insurance payments.

OUR GUESTS SAY

"Thanks for a wonderful web site!"
D.S., New Jersey

"Thanks to this site I have learned much about this tragedy." A.D., IL

"All of my life living in the south suburbs of Chicago, I've never heard of the Eastland disaster story, until last year. I would have thought that this would have been something that I would have learned about in school (history)." G.C., Illinois

"Your website is providing a lot of useful information to people." C.H., Illinois

"I am glad there is such a site on the web. It's very well done as well as informative." J.G., Illinois

SCHEDULE OF MARCH/APRIL PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Throughout the year, the Eastland Disaster Historical Society gives educational presentations on the Eastland Disaster at local libraries in Chicago and throughout the suburbs. These multimedia presentations, open to the public, are informative and moving. Please plan to join us on Tuesday, March 20, 7:00pm at the Glenview Public Library, or Thursday, April 19, 6:30pm at the Aurora Public Library (West Branch).

COMING IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

DePaul University's *"Introduction to Sociology"* selected the Eastland Disaster for their class project last Fall. Read about the success of their project in next month's feature article, "The Eastland Disaster: A Case of Social Amnesia?"

EASTLAND CORNER

As a diver, Charles Gunderson's biggest job was diving for victims of the Eastland Disaster. He dove



for four days, staying underwater up to five hours at a time, groping his way into the boat's grand ballroom where many were trapped. He came close to losing his life.

"I was down in the dance deck when I got mixed up with some twisted stanchions. I had jerked the signal cord a half dozen times before I discovered it must be fouled above - and I hadn't started jerking it until I was satisfied I couldn't get free by myself."

"It was as tight a place as I ever had been in. And then I made another discovery. My air tube had fouled, too, and I couldn't breathe. I was down there alone without air. Those above had no way of knowing what I was up against. It was up to me to live or die."

"I kicked until I must have been blue in the face, and then, all of a sudden, I was free. I took a step and the signal cord was cleared. Air began to come through the tube, but not enough of it to do me much good. You can bet I gave the cord a jerk!"

Gunderson lost consciousness on the upward journey, and it was a half hour before he recovered. Still weak, he insisted on going into the hull again.