

The Call to Remember

Newsletter - Vol. VI, No. 4

EASTLAND DISASTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Jul/Aug 2004

NATIONAL HISTORY MONTH



Eastland Disaster Historical Society

Since our inception, EDHS has made *family history* our top priority. Our perspective has always been (and always will be) that the *Eastland* Disaster is not simply a story about a ship tragedy, but rather that it is a compilation of thousands of personal stories, with each story as compelling and full of human interest as the next. Our corporate logo (above) was developed around this premise: Upon inspection, you will notice that the sketch of the *Eastland* is muted and in the background, while the family is highlighted and in the foreground.

With this in mind, and with the month of October being *National Family History Month*, we have a couple of suggestions for your consideration. (See the next column.)

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Do you have a personal connection to the *Eastland* Disaster? If so, do we have your family's *complete* information on file? Complete information includes names, ages, marital status, personal accounts, and photos of your ancestors or relatives who were involved in the tragedy. To help you observe *National Family History Month* (and if you have a personal connection to the *Eastland* Disaster) we'd like to encourage you to submit YOUR family's history to us.



On our Internet web site, simply check our one-of-a-kind *Eastland* Disaster Passenger List and our Personal Accounts, and if you do not see your family member or relative (with complete information), please contact us. (If you do not have the ability to check the Internet from home, stop at your local library, or ask a friend or family member!)

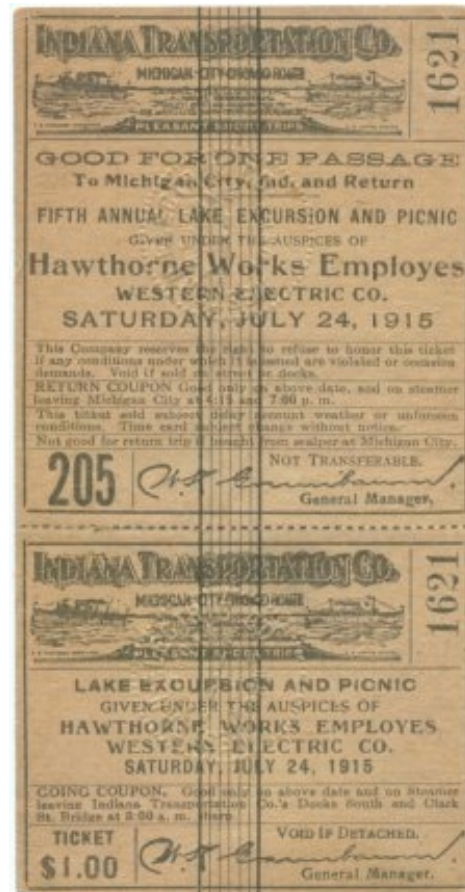
Please note that we are interested in the histories of **ALL** families with a connection to the tragedy, not just those who were passengers. Whether a victim, survivor, rescuer, pastor, priest, undertaker, fireman, policeman, nurse, bystander, diver, ship builder, crew member, or other - we're interested in obtaining your information. We'll add your family's history to our growing files, and share this with others through our Illinois State award-winning Internet web site, the books we offer, the programs we present, and the like.

EDHS RECEIVES DONATION

Michael Timothy, his mother Dorothea, and the rest of the Timothy family recently made a generous donation to EDHS of a rare artifact. The artifact is a near-mint condition, *unused*, original ticket to the July 24, 1915 Western Electric Hawthorne Works employee picnic. While the overall condition of the 90 year-old paper artifact is excellent, it is interesting to also note that the ticket is *unused*. Upon close examination you will notice that the boarding pass remains attached to the body of the ticket at the perforation line. (The boarding pass is the portion of the ticket below the perforation line.) How fortunate for the ticket buyer/holder that the ticket was never used.

Michael Timothy and his mother, Dorothea Timothy, initially contacted EDHS in mid-2002. A relationship formed through the exchange of

several emails and phone calls, which ultimately led to a personal meeting to review the artifact and discuss the options for donation. In addition to the budding relationship with the Timothys, the most rewarding part of the donation was the Timothy family's sincerity in doing the right thing: They felt strongly that the ticket could be of most value by being shared with the public, rather than being kept in a family scrapbook in the closet. Even when faced with the option of selling the artifact to a private party for perhaps as much as several hundred dollars, the Timothys felt the same - the ticket would be of most value by being shared with the public. EDHS was deeply honored when we were chosen by the Timothys to be the organization to receive and be the stewards of their artifact.



(Original unused ticket to the 1915 picnic.)

BOOK UPDATE

Jay Bonansinga, author of **THE SINKING OF THE EASTLAND: America's Forgotten Tragedy**, is an internationally acclaimed author. Did you know that the book (and the *Eastland* Disaster) are of international interest? It is indeed true. During the early first few weeks of sales of the book, we have already sold copies to people located in Australia and the United Kingdom. (And to tie this to National Family History Month, many of these families located around the world have personal family connections to the *Eastland* Disaster.)

Sales of the book to date have been good - we have already had to place a second purchase order for additional copies. Order yours today before all of the first edition copies are gone! If you are contemplating buying one or more copies as gifts, place your order today to ensure delivery in time for the holidays.

EASTLAND CORNER

We started the regular publication of our Illinois State award-winning newsletter in 1999. Edition after edition over the past six years, the "Eastland Corner" consistently is the article read most by our readers.

Our newsletter, *The Call to Remember*, is distributed six times each year and is sent electronically to over 1,400 people (with paper copies being sent via the U.S. Postal Service to an additional 450+ recipients). Last year *The Call to Remember* received a *Certificate of Excellence* award from the Illinois State Historical Society.

Each bi-monthly edition of the *The Call to Remember* includes an article titled the "Eastland Corner," the most highly read segment of our newsletter. This article features the story (and photo, if available) of someone who was involved in the *Eastland* Disaster - a survivor, victim, hero, policeman, fireman, pastor, priest, or undertaker, for example.

In the 20 newsletter editions that we have published, the "Eastland Corner"

has featured the personal accounts and photos of 18 different families. With over 1,000 families (and growing) on file, it might be awhile before you'll see your family's account and photos appear.

Beginning with the first edition for 2005, the *Eastland* Corner will be available as a sponsorship opportunity. For a minimum contribution of \$100, your family's story (and photo) will be selected to appear in the *Eastland* Corner. Requests will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis.

With hundreds of family stories in our files and with family stories being selected randomly, the odds are very good that your family's story may not appear for issues and years to come. With your tax-deductible contribution of \$100 or more, however, your family's appearance in our newsletter will be guaranteed.



REASONS TO SPONSOR THE EASTLAND CORNER

- Share your ancestor's story with nearly 2,000 others across the country.
- Pay tribute to your ancestor in full, four-color print. (Every newsletter is archived on our web site, too.)
- Every contribution received goes to support the programs and offerings of the Society.
- Every sponsor will receive 20 full-color, glossy copies of the newsletter to send to family and friends.
- Your contribution is fully tax deductible to the limits allowed.

Not only is this a wonderful opportunity for you to share the story of your family's personal connection to the *Eastland* Disaster with nearly

2,000 readers, your contribution will go to support EDHS and our programs! For more information or to become a sponsor, simply call us toll-free at 1-877-865-6295 or send us an email at info@eastlanddisaster.org

89TH ANNIVERSARY OBSERVED

Saturday, July 24, 2004 marked 89 years (to the day) since the 5th annual Western Electric Hawthorne Works employee picnic turned tragic. A respectful ceremony and program commemorated the anniversary at the site of the tragedy.



(Flower wreath donated by O'Brien the Florist, Elk Grove Village, Illinois.)

Sisters Susan Decker and Barbara Decker Wachholz, granddaughters of survivor Borghild Aanstad and co-founders of the *Eastland* Disaster Historical Society, spoke to the crowd who had gathered for the brief ceremony along Wacker Drive. After Susan and Barbara shared their comments, United States Coast Guard personnel once again acknowledged those whose lives were affected by the tragedy by laying a spray of flowers in the river where the tragedy occurred. The U.S.C.G. then paid their respect by standing at attention and saluting as the flowers floated on the river's surface.

Immediately following the ceremony, a short program was convened at *Bob Chinn's Crab House*

Chicago. Bob Chinn's is located directly across the river from the site where the *Eastland* rolled over, in the historic Reid Murdoch Center. (During the aftermath of the tragedy, the Reid Murdoch building was used both as a temporary hospital and a temporary morgue.) The program included a donation by the Timothy family and a reading by author Jay Bonansinga.

CORPORATE PROGRAM

Our *Eastland* Disaster Corporate Program makes a great venue for sharing the story of the *Eastland* Disaster with nearly any number of guests - from as few as eight or ten up to as many as several hundred. If you are planning a party, dinner, or an office event and you need a unique and powerful form of entertainment, please give us a call. We'll gladly discuss the options for how the *Eastland* Disaster can be a part of your day or evening.



(*Eastland* Disaster cast at the Corporate Program for the World Presidents' Organization, July 17, 2004.)

CEMETERY TOUR

Join the *Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery* organization on Saturday, November 20 for a tour of Bohemian National Cemetery's *Chapel and Indoor Columbarium*. The spectacular, ornate chapel and unique indoor columbarium were designed by architect Frank Randak. "Mother," the bronze statue created by sculptor Albin Polasek in 1927 to celebrate the cemetery's 50th anniversary, stands in front of the grand staircases of the chapel. This is the only known statue in U.S. cemeteries that recognizes motherhood.

The tour begins at 1:00 p.m. with Albert Walavich's presentation in the large domed chapel. Smaller groups, guided by docents, will then tour the columbarium sections where intricately carved urns rest in individual niches. Encased behind glass doors, each niche also displays momentos and decorations chosen and changed by each respective family. The artistic merit of the urns is recognized by the *Art Institute of Chicago* which sends students to sketch them. Refreshments will be served in the Gatehouse after the tours.



(Statue dedicated to motherhood.)

Tickets for the tour are \$10 each for members, \$15 each for non-members. Please make checks payable to *Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery*, c/o Mary Syrup, 333 Des Plaines Avenue, Riverside, IL, 60546. Thank you.

Bohemian National Cemetery is located at 5255 N. Pulaski Road, Chicago (773-539-8442). Additional information is available by calling Mary Syrup (708-442-7615).

FAMILY HISTORY

At the core of our organization are hundreds of family histories (as they relate to the *Eastland* Disaster). We believe that families and family histories are the only things that truly matter on this planet (next only to our faith). Science and politics and every other sector/discipline in our lives and this world are important, but nowhere near the same level as our faith and our families. Several luminaries share this perspective. (See next column.)

"The family is one of nature's masterpieces." - George Santayana



"In the final analysis, only people are important." - Russell G. Mawby

"In all of us there is a hunger, marrow deep, to know our heritage -- to know who we are and where we have come from. Without this enriching knowledge there is a hollow



yearning. No matter what our attainment in life, there is still a vacuum, an emptiness and the most disquieting loneliness." - Alex Haley

"History is the essence of innumerable biographies." - Thomas Carlyle

"No man can know where he is going unless he knows exactly where he has been and exactly how he arrived at his present place." - Maya Angelou



"To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child.

For what is the worth of human life unless it is woven into the life of our ancestors by the records of history?" - Marcus Tullius Cicero



"Those who do not look upon themselves as links connecting the past with the future do not perform their duty to the world." - Daniel Webster



"There is no life that does not contribute to history." - Dorothy West

"We start and end with family." - Anthony Brandt