



The Eastland Disaster: An Unparalleled Tragedy

Early on the morning of Saturday, July 24, 1915, a light rain fell yet the air was filled with anticipation and excitement. Thousands gathered along the Chicago River for Western Electric's fifth annual employee picnic. More than 7,000 tickets had been purchased for the day-long festivities. But the day quickly turned tragic, resulting in Chicago's greatest loss-of-life tragedy. Find out what happened during a presentation given by the Eastland Disaster Historical Society, featuring the two granddaughters of survivor Bobbie Aanstad.



Program Details

Our 45-minute adult program features: the three recently discovered motion picture videos taken in 1915; dozens of photographs; compelling firsthand narrative delivered by descendants of a survivor; a brief video with ABC's Ron Magers interviewing several survivors; animation depicting the listing of the Eastland while passengers were boarding, and the moment the ship capsized; and a brief video revealing how George "Papa Bear" Halas arrived too late to board the Eastland (a fortunate bit of fate that guaranteed the future of the Chicago Bears and the National Football League).

Our adult program will answer the following questions: Why was the picnic so highly anticipated? What happened? How did it happen? What was the impact? What was the response? Was it avoidable? Who was held accountable? What damages were awarded? What amount of relief funds were raised?