

# *Western Electric*

Vol. IV. No. 6 *News* Aug., 1915



*The leaves forming the wreath upon this month's cover are bay leaves, the sign of mourning. The flowers under the wreath are English hawthorne, the symbol of hope.*

**O**n Saturday, July 24, 1915, the passenger ship *Eastland* was docked in downtown Chicago on the Chicago River preparing to depart for a Lake Michigan cruise to Michigan City, Indiana for a Western Electric employee picnic. Soon after 2,500 passengers boarded the ship it began to list. First to starboard, then to port while still moored to the wharf. The *Eastland* rolled onto its side, spilling passengers into the river and trapping others underwater in the interior cabins, mostly women and children. The disaster claimed 844+ lives.

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Western Electric News  
Published Once a Month for the Employees  
August, 1915  
Volume IV, No. 6

We are the victims of a disaster so awful that the world has stood aghast at its horrors, even in this year of horrors. Of our fellow-workers five hundred have gone down to sudden death. Many are mourning for members of their families, and many for friends and acquaintances. Gloom hangs heavy over the Hawthorne works. Five hundred wage-earners are gone. There are aged and feeble parents left, who have not only lost their children, but who have lost in them all that has kept them from destitution. There are helpless children who have lost their natural protectors. So far as money can relieve distress much has been done and much will be done. The Company's Benefit Fund will provide for some, but that fund is held as a sacred trust and can only be disbursed in accordance with the strict regulations attached to it. The Company has made a special appropriation in order that the dead may be buried and the living assisted promptly and without restrictions. The citizens of Chicago in their generosity have given freely.

We are indebted to each and all of the many who helped us in our hour of trouble, and to each and all of them we acknowledge that obligation. The gratitude of us all and of the Company is particularly due to those among our own number who risked their own safety to save the lives of others. It is due to those who, with prompt efficiency, organized facilities for rescue work, for the issue of information to anxious and sorrowing relatives, and for furnishing prompt relief to the needy, and to those who with unselfish devotion have since by day and night worked ceaselessly for their fellow-workers.

In disaster there is always a lesson. For whom is the lesson? Working people are entitled to their pleasures and to the enjoyment of them in safety. The lesson is not for them. It is not that they should forego their innocent pleasures. Even after the event and looking backward we cannot see that those who made the arrangements left anything undone which should have been done, or that there was anything which they could have done better. The lesson is not for them. An official investigation is in progress. For some one there is a lesson. The lives of the innocent have been taken and they will have been taken in vain unless the lesson is heeded and hereafter there is safety where for our fellow-workers there was death.

H.B. Thayer  
President  
Western Electric Company

## To the Hawthorne Employees

Some of the employees of the Company owe their lives and some of the members of employees' families, and fellow-workers and friends of employees, owe their lives to the heroic and self-sacrificing assistance so freely and generously given on the day of the disaster by employees of every station.

The immediate work of relief and of promptly caring for survivors and families and friends of survivors which was started immediately and is still continuing was only made possible by the ungrudging devotion to humanity of the large number of employees who so freely volunteered their services for all phases of this work.

Of this unhesitating response by members of all departments, our employees and their families and their friends are the beneficiaries and in their behalf I wish to make this public acknowledgment of our heartfelt gratitude.

I have been in sufficiently close contact with all that has been done to realize to the fullest extent the noble and self-sacrificing work of our employees and the gratitude of those whose lives they have saved, or whose families and friends they have assisted, and I want to add my personal feelings of gratitude to all employees who have in any way assisted in this work. I should like to express my appreciation to each individual, but as there have been so many cases of conspicuous service, it seems impossible to be sure of covering them all excepting in this public manner.

H.F. Albright  
General Superintendent  
Hawthorne Works

*The leaves forming the wreath upon this month's cover are bay leaves, the sign of mourning. The flowers under the wreath are English hawthorne, the symbol of hope.*

## THE STORY OF JULY TWENTY-FOURTH

Note - Throughout this article you will find no mention of individual employees by name. So many participated in the work of the last week in July, and all performed their self-imposed tasks with such self-sacrificing devotion and such remarkable effectiveness, that to single out any individual for personal mention seemed unfair to the rest. For the same reason, no individual portraits are shown in this issue, other than those of Mr. Thayer and Mr. Albright.

### Foreword

There is no need, at this date, to tell how the Eastland disaster befell. There are few readers of the News who are not already all too familiar with the tragic details of the catastrophe. However, as a matter of record, let the facts be put down as briefly as possible:

For several years the Western Electric employees have held an annual excursion and picnic. The event has usually taken place on the last Saturday in July. On this day the Hawthorne Works have been closed, and as many of the employees as have cared to make the trip have gone by steamer to Michigan City, Indiana, a four-hours' sail from Chicago, and have spent the day at the picnic park there.

The interest in the picnic has steadily grown, and each succeeding year has seen a larger proportion of the Hawthorne employees in attendance. The 1915 picnic was to be held on a more elaborate scale than ever before, and nearly seven thousand people, including employees, their relatives, and their friends, had planned to go.

The steamers for the lake trip were furnished by the Indiana Transportation Company, which owns the steamers Theodore Roosevelt and the United States, and which chartered three additional steamers - one of them the Eastland - in order to accommodate the crowd.

On Saturday, July 24th, at 7:31 in the morning, the Eastland, on the point of being cast loose from her dock at Clark and Water Streets, Chicago, overturned, with over 2,000 people on board.

At this date (August 2nd) **the exact number of the dead is unknown**. It exceeds nine hundred - 468 of these having been Hawthorne employees.

Such are the main facts of the Eastland disaster. What follows is an attempt to chronicle the subsequent events of the last week in July.

## The Information Bureaus

The news of the disaster spread with incredible rapidity, and within half an hour of the catastrophe the streets of the Loop district were jammed with enormous crowds. A large proportion of these people were, of course, curiosity seekers, but there were hundreds who had friends or relatives on the boat, and were frantically trying to get some news of them. It was imperative that some means be found for collecting and distributing information concerning the Eastland's passengers. The Western Electric information stations that met this need may be said rather to have sprung from necessity, on the spur of the moment, than to have been planned.

The first of these organizations, if it may be so termed, was formed at Sprague & Warner's big grocery store warehouse. The lower floor had been thrown open for the reception of survivors, and the room in which they happened to be sheltered, the order department, contained dozens of telephones. Within fifteen minutes of the accident, Western Electric employees were busy collecting the names of what survivors they could, and telephoning to friends and relatives.

It soon became evident that the large numbers of people involved would be too much for such a makeshift solution of the problem, and a number of the employees, who had taken some of the survivors to the large downtown hotels for temporary shelter, decided to establish some sort of immediate information bureau, where information could be collected and given out concerning the dead and the saved. **There was a vacant store at 214 North Clark Street, less than a hundred yards from the dock, and after trying vainly to find the owner, the men broke the lock on the door and took possession.**

Speed was the first requisite, and a remarkable amount of work was accomplished within a very short time. The room was heaped up with old furniture and rubbish of all sorts. This was hastily swept into one corner, and chairs and tables were brought in from a neighboring saloon. Meanwhile, one of the employees ran down the street to a stationery store and bought a thousand index cards. **By half-past nine, about half an hour after the inception of the idea, the Clark Street information bureau was in full swing.**

The bureau started with a nucleus of 25 names, which had been collected at Sprague & Warner's. These were hastily written out on sheets of paper in alphabetical order, and pinned to the wall, for the benefit of those making inquiries. **Another employee went down near the dock with a megaphone, and as the survivors came out on the street requested them to register at the information bureau.** The rescued were also asked to give the names of any others who they knew were either definitely saved or dead.

As the list of names grew, the pressure on the information bureau grew correspondingly greater. At first, one man had been assigned to preside over the sheets containing the names of those rescued or dead. But this plan had to be modified. The letters of the alphabet were hastily chalked on the wall in a row extending the entire length of the room. Under each letter an information worker was stationed to handle the names beginning with his letter.

Meanwhile the **Chicago Telephone Company** had been doing some very quick work, and by ten o'clock had made an emergency installation of telephones. These, of course, greatly increased the efficiency of the work of the bureau. The bureau was also assigned a number, "Franklin 188."

The roll of dead and injured was steadily growing, and as the various warehouses in the neighborhood opened their doors for the reception of the victims, information workers were sent down to collect the names of the living and of the identified dead. Other workers visited the Iroquois Memorial Hospital, The Franklin Emergency Hospital, and the Sherman Hotel, where an

aggregate of about 150 people had been taken. These new names were telephoned to Clark Street.

**By noon, the telephone company had installed about twenty telephones for the use of the bureau, as well as others for the use of those who wished to telephone home or make inquiries about the missing. The owner of a vacant store next door offered the use of his place also, and a dozen additional telephones were installed there for public use. All calls made over these various telephones were free.**

In the meantime a card index file of all names received had been made, in addition to the alphabetical lists. As soon as an inquiry was received, the name of the person inquired for was put on a card, together with the name and nearest telephone number of the person inquiring.

Whenever a name was reported upon definitely, it would be looked up in the card index before posting. If the name did not appear, it was immediately given a card, and posted as well. If it did appear, the bureau was able to telephone the information to the person whose inquiry appeared on the card. This information was also added to the name where it appeared in the lists along the side of the room.

By noon it was found that many people were asking where the bodies of the dead had been taken. The bureau accordingly secured from the police a list of the temporary morgues. This list was hurried to a printer, who set it up as it was read off to him. By two o'clock, 3,000 cards had been printed and were being distributed as widely as possible.

By Saturday afternoon the inquiries had begun to pour in at Hawthorne in such numbers that an additional information bureau was obviously necessary there. **The telephone company made another rush installation, and established a battery of extra telephones in the employment department at Hawthorne, just inside the 48th Avenue gates.** A partial list of the names on file at Clark Street was hastily secured, and another group of employees started a bureau at the works. When they arrived they found a crowd of several hundred anxious inquirers gathered at the gate. The bureau was in operation by half-past two, when the waiting crowd was admitted and given all information as fast as it came in. The Clark Street bureau was in constant communication with the Hawthorne bureau, and telephoned fresh information as soon as it was received.

**The telephone company also completed an arrangement whereby it received duplicates of all information that came in at Clark Street. Many of the telephone inquiries were then diverted by the company, who gave out information direct from the exchange, thus helping materially to lessen the burden upon the Clark Street bureau.**

A great many pieces of jewelry, watches, pocket-books, and the like, had been taken from the bodies of the unidentified dead. Owing to the great number of the bodies, as well as to the fact that many of the victims had been very hastily stripped of their clothing in the efforts to resuscitate them, it was impossible to know from which bodies the various articles had been taken. A vast amount of personal property of all sorts was also taken from the wreck. By Saturday night all these articles were piled up in the offices of the city police custodian, in apparently hopeless confusion. A number of the employees accordingly went to work at this office, to help police in the task of sorting and restoring the property.

Articles were first sorted into piles, each pile containing pieces of one kind. Watches, for example, were all together in one pile, pocket-books in another, and rings in another. Where property was marked so as to make identification of the owner possible, the latter was notified; in case the owner was dead, or listed as missing, the custodian tried to locate the nearest relatives of the victim. A vast amount of this property was, of course, impossible to identify. Exhaustive classified lists were made, containing a complete description of each article. These lists were posted at the Hawthorne information bureau as fast as they were completed. The Western Electric workers were also able to be of assistance to the police when the owners began to appear to claim their possessions. By their acquaintance among the employees and their familiarity with the Company's organization, they were able to help confirm the identity of the claimants.

On Saturday afternoon the Second Regiment Armory had been established as a morgue for the reception of all the unidentified dead. By Sunday morning the telephone company had installed twelve telephones in the bandstand gallery. A third information bureau was accordingly organized at the armory. This bureau kept in constant communication with the Clark Street and Hawthorne bureaus. Its organization was similar to theirs, except that it did not operate a card index system.

The armory bureau obviated a great deal of unnecessary suffering and suspense among those who visited the morgue, as it was able, in many cases, to give good news that had come over the telephone from Clark Street and Hawthorne.

It was also of great service in getting the names of the identified dead to the other information bureaus. **On Saturday morning the A.T. & T. Company placed at our disposal a direct wire from the armory to our New York Office. An extension from this wire was later in the day carried to the Clark Street bureau, where an operator was in constant attendance.**

The armory bureau worked in connection with this wire. Western Electric employees were scattered throughout the armory. As soon as the identity of a body had been established, one of the employees would call out, "Identified." This would bring a couple of policemen, who would see that the body was carried over to the coroner, who had an office in one corner. Other employees were stationed here, one of whom would take down the name of the identified victim as it was given to the coroner. He would immediately run upstairs to the gallery and hand the name to the telegraph operator stationed there, who would send the information simultaneously to New York and the Clark Street bureau. That bureau would in turn telephone the information to Hawthorne.

About half-past nine Sunday morning an information stand was established outside the armory, on a street corner. This was a taxi-cab, attended by employees, and with a telephone installed in it. The line of people waiting to get into the armory had to pass this stand. About a dozen employees kept going up and down the line, questioning the people, and getting telephoned information for them from Clark Street. In this way many people obtained definite information concerning those for whom they were looking and were spared the ordeal of searching through the bodies in the armory.

Not all of those in line had any good reason for wanting to get into the armory. Many were merely curious to see the bodies. In questioning the people, the Western Electric employees were usually able to determine those who had any real right to enter. Whenever one of these inquirers was located he was taken to the taxicab, where an effort was made to get information from Clark Street regarding the missing person. If none was available, the inquirer was given a signed pass. By an arrangement with the police, the holders of these passes were allowed to enter the armory ahead of the line. In this way, the genuine inquirers were spared the terrible strain of waiting, while the morbidly curious were kept standing in line indefinitely.

On Sunday morning also several employees made the rounds of all the Chicago hospitals, securing a number of additional names in this way.

The information work was fully organized by Sunday afternoon, and it was then and on Sunday and Monday nights that the heaviest work of the week was done. Both the Clark Street and Hawthorne bureaus kept open all Saturday night, and by Sunday it was obvious that the information work would have to go on night and day for some time. The crowds at the Clark Street bureau on Sunday and Monday were enormous. There were great crowds at the Hawthorne bureau, also, and in addition, such an avalanche of telephone inquiries that there was not even an attempt at keeping track of their number. There are ten trunk lines connecting the Hawthorne PBX board with the Lawndale exchange, a large number for a private branch. **Yet on Monday night the calls were coming in so fast that the Lawndale operators were putting them through three to a trunk. In other words, while one inquirer was talking to Hawthorne, two other calls were connected up on the same trunk line, waiting their turn. It was next to impossible to make outgoing calls. "Long distance" simply did not answer. Temporary additional trunk lines were installed later in the week, and relieved the congestion.**

The information stand outside the armory was discontinued about the middle of the week. The work of tabulating the articles at the custodian's office was completed by Thursday. The armory bureau was discontinued on Friday, when the last of the bodies had been identified. The Clark Street bureau was open night and day until Saturday at six P.M., when it was closed permanently. The bureau at Hawthorne finished its work on Sunday, August 1st. In the course of the week it succeeded in determining the fate of every Western Electric employee who had been aboard the Eastland, with the exception of one man, who is still recorded as "Missing."

The bureau also compiled a similar listing of all the other passengers on the boat. This list contains a larger number of "Missing," but is otherwise complete.

## The Relief Bureaus

The imperative task on Saturday was the rescue of the living; on Sunday, the identification of the dead. There still remained the task of giving help to the dependents of Western Electric employees who had lost their lives.

The relief work, like the information work, began more or less without any formal organization. It was certain that many families would be left in great financial distress, in spite of the Employees' Benefit and Insurance Plan. For under the Plan, death benefits are payable only to families of deceased employees who have been five years or more with the Company, while many of the employees who were on the Eastland had been with the Company for only a comparatively short time. As early as Saturday afternoon a number of volunteer investigators began visiting the homes of some of the employees who were known to have been lost, in order to find out what help their families would need.

The formal relief work of the Company began, however, on Sunday, when, following the arrival of President Thayer and Vice-President Halligan, a meeting of the executives was called, and the sum of one hundred thousand dollars voted available for relief purposes.

A relief bureau was immediately organized, and began active work Sunday afternoon. It was at first planned to have only one bureau, which would send its investigators to the homes of the dead, but so many relatives and other dependents came to the Works direct, to apply for relief, that the original plan was modified. Two bureaus were organized, one to handle "outside" relief work, and one for "inside" relief work. In addition, committees were appointed to arrange for funerals, both out of town and in town, wherever the families desired to have the Company make such arrangements. At Sunday's meeting also, the homes of as many as possible of the known dead employees were located on a large map of the city and its suburbs, and routes were planned in order to facilitate the work of investigators.

On Monday morning both bureaus were in full swing. Of the hundred thousand dollar fund, fifty thousand dollars in cash was at Hawthorne, ready for immediate use.

## Outside Relief Work

It was imperative that the families of the victims be relieved of immediate want as soon as possible. By Monday afternoon there were as many as 150 relief workers visiting homes all over the city. The workers usually went around in automobiles, which enabled them to cover their territory with a minimum of delay. The number of investigators was greatly reduced toward the end of the week, when most of the families had received immediate relief.

The outside relief bureau kept in close touch with the information bureau. As soon as one of the dead had been definitely identified as a Western Electric employee, the information would be transmitted to the relief bureau, together with information as to the employee's department and length of service. One of the relief workers would then be assigned to visit the victim's home, in order to determine the circumstances of the family and whether any relief was needed. The investigator would then report to the committee members in charge of recommendations. These members would then, after consulting with investigator, authorize the payment of a certain sum to relieve the family's immediate needs, the investigator making a second trip to take the money. This process was not as lengthy as it sounds. "Red tape" was reduced to a minimum. A case could be investigated and relieved in the course of a few hours.

The sums paid out ranged anywhere between \$10 and \$100, and were used for many different purposes - in payment of rent, to buy food, to buy mourning clothes, or in payment of cemetery charges. Although no money was advanced for funeral expenses, the Company, through the two special committees, made all arrangements for funerals and assumed all the expense, whenever the families desired it.

Money might be paid out to the same family more than once. In some cases three or four payments were made during the course of the week.

## Inside Relief Work

The inside relief bureau was organized to help people who came direct to the plant for relief. The committee members interviewed the applicants, and after learning the name of the applicant and of the employee in whose name relief was asked, would determine whether, as often happened, the outside bureau had already reported the case. This method avoided duplication of records.

Where the identity of the applicant was established without question, the chairman of the committee would immediately pay over the amount determined upon. If there was a doubt as to the applicant's identity, an investigator would be sent back with the applicant in order to ascertain conditions at home. This investigator was authorized to pay out money, generally a fixed sum, in case he thought it advisable. For this purpose the investigator was usually a responsible employee from the department in which the lost employee had worked.

During the latter part of the week many people were interviewed, but few who were in need of immediate relief. These later applicants came usually for information, generally as to death benefits under the Plan.

## Red Cross Work

Meanwhile the United States branch of the International Red Cross Society had established a relief station at Hawthorne. The station occupied offices in the Central Works building, being in charge of J.J. O'Connor, district superintendent, and Mr. Bicknell, national director. This organization was likewise in operation by Monday morning, and conducted relief work among the families of victims who were not Western Electric employees.

## The Permanent Organization

By Thursday all the families of victims had received immediate relief, and the relief bureaus began to wind up their affairs preparatory to turning their work over to the so-called permanent relief organization.

This organization superseded the temporary relief bureaus on Sunday, August 1st. It is under the direction of A.W. Hitchcock, Assistant Superintendent of the employment and welfare branch. The organization will administer the balance of the hundred thousand dollar fund, and will take up the work of affording permanent relief to the dependents of those of the employees who went down on the Eastland who had been less than five years with the Company. In the case of employees who had been in the Company's employ five years or longer, the regular death benefits will be administered by the benefit fund committee.

## In Conclusion

This record would be sadly incomplete without some attempt to thank those who served so generously during that terrible Saturday in July and the days of grief and horror that followed it. All Chicago stepped forward. Warehouses along the docks threw wide their doors to give shelter for the living and a temporary resting place for the dead. The downtown hotels took in scores of the survivors, and department stores furnished wraps and blankets. Employees of the American Express Company worked all day Saturday on the hull of the Eastland, helping in the rescue work. Dozens of private automobiles and taxicabs were offered to carry information workers about the city and to take the survivors of the wreck to their homes. On July 31st the information committee, having located the owner of the store on Clark Street, went down to pay the rental for the week. **It was refused.**

By the night of the 24th, the **Commonwealth Edison Company** had wired the Clark Street store, and had installed a battery of 200-watt nitrogen-filled lamps. The **People's Gas Company** had meanwhile installed a meter and had turned on the gas for use in case of emergency. By noon of the same day **our Chicago house** had installed ten electric fans, ready for service.

It would be hard to overestimate the value of the results accomplished through the splendid co-operation of the **Chicago Telegraph Company**. Working at lightning speed, its installers put in dozens of emergency telephones. At the Clark Street bureau the men had to do their work in midst of a frantic, jostling crowd that jammed the entire room. **Yet they completed an installation of nearly forty telephones in three hours.** Without the help of the telephone company the efficiency of our information bureaus would have been lowered one-half.

**By turning over to us a direct wire to New York, the Long Lines department of the A.T. & T. Company made it possible to transmit names as fast as they could be spoken.** The later telegraphic connections from the armory to Clark Street and Hawthorne insured complete accuracy in transmitting names and department numbers.

As for the Hawthorne employees, the work they accomplished is unbelievable. During the three days immediately following the accident there were dozens who worked for twenty-four hours at a stretch. **Many had an aggregate of less than five hours sleep out of seventy-two.** One man, after barely escaping with his life from the water, went home, put on dry clothes, and returned to the morgue, where he was on duty for twenty-six consecutive hours. Another did not go to bed from Saturday to Wednesday. **These are not isolated instances. They are typical.**

Nor was it merely a matter of going without sleep. They worked; and wonderfully efficient work it was. No one was told to do anything. No one waited to be told. All organizations were voluntary, and the volunteers willingly did whatever it fell to them to do, whether it was the compilation of endless lists of names, or the ghastly work of keeping watch at the morgues.

There were no men, no women at Hawthorne that week - only people, who worked. To many of the girls who volunteered, the typists, there fell work that was little better than sheer drudgery. They did it - twelve, eighteen, twenty-four hours at a stretch. Concerning the work of the telephone operators the News speaks more at length elsewhere. It remains only to be said here that during Saturday afternoon and evening it was impossible to reach most of the regular operators. **Girls from the clerical departments offered to do what they could, and took tolls, recorded messages, and even helped to operate the switchboard.** In relief work the girls were invaluable, accomplishing results that would have been impossible for the men.

How to thank such people? It is hard to find words to express what they did. Yet, if the spirit of Hawthorne could speak, she would only say, "I did what I could. It was little enough."

They did what they could. They gave of what they had to give - of their strength, their pity, and, above all, their loyalty. **The Western, even in her grief, is proud of Hawthorne.**

## WESTERN ELECTRIC NEWS

Published Monthly for the Employees  
By the Western Electric Company

H.B. Thayer, President H.A. Halligan, Vice-President W.P. Sidley, VP and General Counsel A.L. Salt, VP and Gen'l Purchasing Agent Gerard Swope, VP and Gen'l Sales Mgr H.F. Albright, General Superintendent J.W. Johnson, Treasurer C.E. Scribner, Chief

Engineer G.C. Pratt, Secretary R.H. Gregory, Comptroller

Office of publication and address of President, Secretary, and Treasurer, 463 West Street, New York City.

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## **VOLUME IV AUGUST, 1915 NUMBER 6**

Under the shadow of the greatest tragedy that has ever befallen organized industry, the News publishes this Memorial Issue. And yet the story of the Eastland as it is here set down is tragedy illumined by the highest and noblest of human traits. The record of this terrible disaster teems with evidence of generosity and self-sacrifice, and deeds of heroism.

President Thayer's message of condolence and appreciation, following his own continuous and personal work at Chicago, leaves no room for further comment. But there is one aspect of the disaster, of which he as the official head of the Company perhaps hesitated to make mention, and to this the News, representing as it does the great body of employees, draws attention.

Granting that a great catastrophe was necessary to bring about a new era in the safety of travel by water, does it not seem a cruel destiny that this sacrifice of lives had to be made from the ranks of the employees of a company whose achievements in the field of safe-guarding the lives of its operatives are so generally recognized? We men and women have been surrounded by every known preventive of accidents. We have worked in buildings proof against fire, on machines protected against liability to injure us, within call of medical and hospital service. Indeed, our lives have been made safer at our work than in our homes or at our play. ***Surely our Western Electric Company deserved a better fate.***

## **RESOLUTION**

*Adopted by the Board of Directors of the **Westinghouse Club** in Regular Meeting,  
July 27, 1915*

*Whereas* a deep affliction has overwhelmed the Western Electric Company in the overturning of the steamer *Eastland*, resulting in the loss of so many lives, and

*Whereas* this company is engaged in a similar work to that of our own, and in view of the cordial relations existing between the two companies, we feel very deeply the affliction that has befallen our co-laborers; therefore be it

*Resolved* that we, as the Board of Directors of the Westinghouse Club, representing the employees of the Westinghouse interests, extend to President Harry Thayer, and through him, to the employees of the Western Electric Company, our deepest and heartfelt sympathy in this overwhelming disaster.

*Resolved*, further, that a copy of these Resolutions be transmitted to President Thayer, and to the Western Electric News.

### **City of Michigan City, Indiana**

Clerk's Office

A Resolution of Sympathy passed July 26, 1915, by the Common Council of the City of Michigan City, Indiana

In Sympathy

*Whereas*, The people of Michigan City have heard with inexpressible horror of the awful catastrophe of the steamship *Eastland*.  
And

*Whereas*, The hearts of this people are filled with grief for those that are lost and sympathy for those who have lost. And

*Whereas*, Some expression of this grief and sorrow seems meet in this hour of affliction; Now, Therefore, Be It

*Resolved*, By the Common Council of Michigan City, that it hereby expresses and records the universal sorrow of all the people of this community occasioned by this appalling disaster, and tenders to the bereaved relatives, friends and associates of the stricken victims of this calamity its sincere and heartfelt sympathy and condolence. May the wisdom of a merciful God heal the bleeding wounds the errors of man have inflicted.

State of Indiana,  
County of LaPorte, } ss:

I, Alexander Spychalski, City Clerk of the City of Michigan City, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution passed by the Common Council of said City of Michigan City on the 26th day of July, 1915.

ALEXANDER SPYCHALSKI, Clerk.

## **HAWTHORNE'S AUTOMOBILE FLEET**

The work of the temporary relief bureaus during the week of July 26th-31st was greatly facilitated by the fact that the relief workers were able to go about in automobiles. In this way they were enabled not only to make more visits in the course of a day, but to accomplish their work without wasting much-needed energy in long journeys on foot and in street cars. The week following the disaster was one of almost constant rain and mist, a fact that made the automobiles doubly welcome.

That so many machines were available was due largely to the generosity of the Hawthorne employees, many of whom offered their own cars for as long time as the relief committee needed them. The machines began to come in on Sunday afternoon, and by Monday noon there were thirty-five available. During the week, more than sixty employees' cars were in use. In one instance three men had just bought a brand new car together. It was delivered for the warerooms on Monday forenoon. Monday afternoon, one of the owners drove it over to the Works and put it into service, and for the rest of the week the three owners took turns driving it through the muddy roads of the suburbs.

In addition to the employees' cars, some sixteen runabouts were loaned by the **Chicago Telephone Company**, which also assigned one of its supervisors to each car, to act as chauffeur. Several other cars were loaned by shop customers, suppliers, and friends of employees.

So many funerals were held on Wednesday, Chicago's official day of mourning, that it was impossible to obtain hearses enough to hold the bodies. Accordingly, on that day **Marshall Field & Company** sent out thirty-nine of their largest auto trucks. These, specially decorated, were employed both as hearses and for conveying the mourners. **The Illinois Athletic Club and the Chicago Athletic Club** also loaned many of the members' automobiles for carrying mourners to the funerals.

During the week, stenographers and typists were at the Works day and night, working in two twelve-hour shifts (6 A. M. to midnight, and midnight to 6 A. M.). The girls were taken to and from work in taxicabs, six or eight of these being in constant use during the day, while three or four were stationed at the Works all night, ready for emergency use.

The Company furnished gasoline and oil for the cars used, and attended to tire and other repairs. The average mileage from Sunday morning to Saturday afternoon - 680 miles for each car - shows to what good use the cars were put

## **HOW THE HAWTHORNE HOSPITAL STAFF WORKED**

Hawthorne maintains an emergency hospital for the employees which, except in size, is the most perfectly equipped in Chicago. A complete description of it would take several pages, and must wait for a later issue of the News. The present account merely describes the work done by the staff subsequent to the Eastland catastrophe.

The resident physician is Doctor W. A. Lucas, and Mrs. M. C. Moeller is superintending nurse with a staff of seven graduate nurses under her.

On the morning of the 24th, Dr. Lucas started for the Theodore Roosevelt, on which he was going out to Michigan City to take charge of the hospital tent that was to be maintained at the picnic. He was within a block of the docks when the Eastland capsized, and hearing the screams of the passengers, and realizing that some serious accident had occurred, he started to run for the dock, but so quickly did the boat go that it had turned completely over by the time he arrived. He managed to get on

the boat and at once went to work helping to pull people through the port-holes, and working over those who were unconscious.

Mrs. Mowller, who had not planned to go to the picnic, got word of the catastrophe over the telephone at her home about eight o'clock. Inside of ten minutes she had dressed, telephoned one of her nurses, and was on her way to the dock. She and the other nurse, Miss Wilcox, had literally to force their way through the police lines, and finally succeeded in getting up the side of the boat, where they joined Dr. Lucas.

The pulmotors did not arrive until 10 o'clock. When they did get there, Mrs. Moeller helped operate one until about eleven o'clock. By then, she saw that she would be more needed at the hospital than on the docks, so left with Dr. Lucas and returned to Hawthorne.

Dr. Lucas tried to get back to the boat, but could not get through the police lines. He finally managed to get permission to pass after appealing to Dr. Carter, the police surgeon. Dr. Lucas immediately went to the Acting Mayor, who was at the dock, and obtained authority for the Western Electric relief workers to pass through the lines without hindrance. He remained on the boat most of the day.

Meanwhile the hospital was worked to its fullest capacity to care for survivors who were suffering from injury or shock. Although Hawthorne is several miles from the scene of the disaster, the staff had all it could do. Most of the employees live near the Works, and all who could be moved were taken to their homes as soon as possible. Slight injuries were given temporary dressings downtown, and the patients were immediately taken to the Hawthorne hospital in automobiles, to receive more thorough treatment. These patients report to the hospital daily. The Hawthorne nurses also went the round of the city hospitals, in order to locate Eastland victims and to arrange for their transfer as soon as advisable. Several cases of injury and shock that were not progressing favorable under local treatment were transferred bodily to the Hawthorne hospital, where the patients remained until they recovered. The hospital has six beds and these were all occupied for a time.

The Chicago River is very dirty and it was feared that those who had swallowed any of the water might contract typhoid fever. Consequently the Chicago Health Department urged all Eastland survivors to be inoculated with typhoid antitoxin. During the three days following the disaster the Hawthorne hospital vaccinated more than two hundred (200) people against typhoid.

All of the services described above were, of course, rendered to any and all Eastland survivors, regardless of whether or not they were Western Electric employees.

When the hospital was visited on Wednesday, July 28th, none of the staff had left the building since the day of the accident. They had had about five hours' sleep apiece since Saturday. Yet none of them seemed to think that they had done anything unusual. "Why shouldn't we do this work?" asked Doctor Lucas. "It's our job. If there's any credit coming it's due to the entire Western Electric organization. They're wonderful!"

"There is one girl, though" he added, "who deserves all the credit that anyone can give her, and that's Miss Repa, one of our nurses. That girls did a day's work that ought not to be forgotten. If you want to talk about the hospital, get her story."

The News did get Miss Repa's story. It appears on another page.

## **IN MEMORIAM - JULY 24, 1915**

The day, whose dawning brought a surge of joy  
To gladdened men and care-free maids, is done.  
And in the blackened shadow of despair,  
A night too dark for gleams of light to pierce,  
Is plunged a people mourning for its own  
Engulfed within the stilly sea that marks  
The end of life.

But that the dead may live,  
The living must achieve the monument  
Begun by they who are no more, and who  
Are best remembered, truly, not by stones  
That mark an earthly rest, but in the hearts  
And by the deeds of those that stay to do  
The world's great works. 'Tis so that honor  
May be done to all whose ended lives

Brought each a meed of joy to some and in  
Whose passing there is brought a deeper sorrow  
Than a people's suffering heart can bear.  
No great or noble cause had called our brothers  
And our sisters to their end, yet must  
Our consolation be the knowledge gained  
That an Omniscient Being had decreed  
Their span of life to be complete and taken  
These, His children, to their lasting peace.

*W.A. Wolff*

New York, July 28, 1915.

## **THE EXPERIENCES OF A HAWTHORNE NURSE**

As Told by Miss Repa, Hawthorne Hospital.

*The picnic committee had arranged for the maintenance of a hospital tent at Michigan City, for the treatment of the minor accidents that might occur during the day. Miss Repa was one of three nurses from the Hawthorne hospital who had been detailed to be in attendance at the tent. All three had agreed to go out on the "Theodore Roosevelt," the second boat out, and Miss Repa was on her way to the dock when the catastrophe occurred. The following is the story of her experience as she told it for the News on July 28th.*

I was on a trolley car, at Lake Street, when I heard what I thought must be screams; I could hear them even above the noise of the car and the noises on the street. Just then a mounted policeman galloped up and stopped all the traffic, shouting: "Excursion boat upset - look out for the ambulance!"

I knew at once that it must be one of our boats, and ran to the front of the car, to get off. The motorman tried to stop me, but I slipped past him and jumped off just as one of the ambulances came up. It had to slow up on account of the congestion, and I managed to jump on the back step. I had my uniform on, and so was allowed to stay on until we got to the dock.

I don't know how I got on the dock, or on the Eastland. Indeed, there are a good many things that happened that day that I am still hazy about. All I remember is climbing up the slippery side of the boat, losing my footing, and being shoved up by somebody from behind. I finally got to where I could stand up on the side of the boat, which was lying out of water.

I shall never be able to forget what I saw. People were struggling in the water, clustered so thickly that they literally covered the surface of the river. A few were swimming; the rest were floundering about, some clinging to a life raft that had floated free, others clutching at anything they could reach - at bits of wood, at each other, grabbing each other, pulling each other down, and screaming! The screaming was the most horrible of all.

They were already pulling them out from below when I got there, out of the water and out through the portholes. People were being dragged out, wet, bleeding, and hysterical, by the scores. Most of those from the decks and the inside of the boat were cut more or less severely, because the chairs and benches had slid down on top of them when the boat went over.

Those who had no injuries beyond the wetting and the shock were sent to the various hotels. I started working, first on the boat itself and then on the dock, helping to try and resuscitate those who were unconscious. The pulmotors had not yet arrived, and we had to try what "first aid" measures we could.

The injured were taken over to the Iroquois Memorial Hospital. Remembering that this is only an emergency hospital, and is not equipped to handle a large number of cases at once, I asked a policeman how many nurses were on duty there. He said that there were only two. Knowing that I would be more needed there than at the dock, for the present, I hurried over. I went back and forth between the hospital and the dock several times during the day, and had no trouble in making the journey quickly. I simply jumped on a patrol wagon or an ambulance, and being, as I have said, in uniform, was able to make the trip without being questioned. The one place I did have trouble, and a great deal of it, was at the dock. The police had evidently received orders to keep everybody back, and so zealously did they perform their work that I was held up several times until I could be identified. I finally remembered the arm bands that we nurses had received to wear at the picnic. These were of red, white and blue cloth, with a red cross on them. After I had put mine on I had no further trouble.

When I got to the Iroquois I found the two nurses distracted. More and more people were arriving every minute, wet and shivering, and there were no blankets left. Something had to be done quickly, so I had one of the nurses telephone to **Marshall Field & Company** for 500 blankets, with orders to charge them to the Western Electric Company. In the meantime I

telephoned to some of the nearby restaurants and had them send over hot soup and coffee to the hospital.

By this time the hospital was so full of people that we had no place to put the less seriously injured while they were drying off. Luckily, just at this time, word came from men working in the boiler room of a large building nearby that they would care for as many people as we cared to send over.

I must say that the people of Chicago showed a wonderful spirit. Everyone did all he could to help. As soon as my patients were sufficiently recovered, I would send them home, thinking it better to have them with their families as soon as possible. In order to do this, I would simply go out into the street, stop the first automobile that came along, load it up with people, and tell the owner or driver where to take them. **And not one driver said "no," or seemed anything but anxious to help out!** When the women would be brought off the boat dripping wet, the men standing by simply took off their coats and put them around them.

About nine or half-past I started back to the dock. When I got to Clark Street the crowd was so dense that I simply couldn't walk a step further. So I got on a hook and ladder truck that was going down.

When I got to the dock they had begun to bring the bodies up from the hold, and it was pouring rain. The bodies came out faster than we could handle them. By this time a number of outside nurses and doctors were at work on the victims. Most of them were dead, but a few still showed signs of life. I saw that if any of these were to be saved we must get them away from the dock. The crowding and confusion were terrible. The bodies were laid out on the dock, on the bridges, some on the Roosevelt, others on the sidewalk. A crowd of willing but ignorant volunteers kept getting in the way, and made our attempts at resuscitation almost useless.

I asked one of the policemen: "Isn't there some building where we can take these people? Some of them have a fighting chance if we can get them in out of the rain and away from this crowd."

He promised to see what could be done, and went away. A little later he returned, saying that we could take the bodies over to Reid & Murdoch's warehouse. We took the bodies we had, and all the others that came out, over there; but it was too late. Out of hundreds that we took to the warehouse, only four were revived.

By this time I had on my arm band, and so was able to go from the dock to the warehouse and back without being stopped. What made the confusion at the dock still worse was the fact that many of the people who had been pulled out of the water uninjured were still so dazed that they were wandering up and down without knowing where they were or what they were doing. I found one man up a little alley nearby. He was wandering up and down, with a ghastly, expressionless face, repeating over and over again, "I lost them all, I lost them all." His wife and three children were somewhere in the hold of the Eastland.

About twelve o'clock they reached the bodies in the inner cabins; and after that time all the bodies that came up seemed to be women and children. It had begun to drizzle just before the boat was to start, and the mothers had taken their children inside to be out of the wet.

In the meantime my sister was looking for me in the morgues and at Reid & Murdoch's. Someone had telephoned to my home that I had been seen climbing over the side of the boat and had fallen off. I was working over a man down at the warehouse when I heard someone scream, "My God, it's Helen!" It was my sister. She fainted when she saw me.

When I started out in the morning I had had on a white uniform and white shoes. By noon, what with dressing wounds and kneeling on the dock, I was covered with bloodstains and caked with mud from head to foot. I had lost my coat. A fireman threw a woman's skirt over my shoulders, and I kept the rain out with that.

At four o'clock I went home. There was nothing left to do. I had been on my feet since seven-thirty that morning, and I felt that if I ever sat down I would never get up again. I came home in the street car, with the skirt wrapped around my shoulders and my brother's raincoat over that.

## **TO THE PUBLIC**

Some of the Employees of the Western Electric Company owe their lives and some owe the lives of members of their families or of friends or of fellow workers to the help so freely and generously given last Saturday and in these succeeding days. On all of them lies a debt of gratitude.

Offices were thrown open for the reception of the dead and dying.

Business houses, great and small, and the Public Utilities Companies suspended their usual operations to devote their facilities to the work of rescue.

Passers-by stopped to become life-savers.

Of this unhesitating and ungrudging response to the call of humanity, our employees and their families and their friends, are the beneficiaries, and in their behalf we make this public acknowledgment of heartfelt gratitude.

WESTERN ELECTRIC COMPANY.

*This Card of Thanks Appeared in All Chicago Newspapers on July 29th.*

Would that we might in some measure assuage the anguish of those who, though spared by the fate that overtook their nearest and dearest on earth, now stand disconsolate before a thousand new-made graves along the waters that man's hand has sought and thought to conquer, but with achievement all-puny, insufficient.

Would that this were within our power, that we might convey to these our friends - for friends they are - at least a modicum of the testimony of sympathy we bear them; that into their trembling palms we might steal a hand of solace and support, when life to them seems darkest, the future all-forlorn.

Virtually of our blood and sinew were they - comrades in life's work; and we stand with heads uncovered, bowed in grief and pity.

***The above is an extract from an editorial in the Telephone News of Philadelphia for August 1st. similar editorials and comments appear in the current issues of the following magazines:***

***Telegraph & Telephone Age; Electrical Review & Western Electrician; Electrical World; Journal of Electricity, Power and Gas; Telephony; Telephone Engineer; Telephone Review; The Transmitter; Bell Telephone News, and others.***

## **THIRTY-FOUR HOURS AT THE SWITCHBOARD**

What One Western Electric Telephone Operator Did.

Not all of the heroes - and heroines - of the Eastland disaster were at the docks. In fact, one of the finest feats of the terrible week of July 24th was performed by a telephone operator miles away from the scene of the disaster. She is Miss Margaret Condon, chief operator of the Western Electric Company's private branch exchange at Hawthorne. She remained on duty at the switchboard from noon of July 24th until late at night July 25th - thirty-four hours of continuous service.

When Miss Condon was seen at the exchange on Wednesday night, July 28th, she had been on duty for a total of nearly seventy-four hours out of the past one hundred and three - more than three whole days out of five; she looked surprisingly fresh after her ordeal, although it was obvious that she had been under a sever strain; and she was expecting to go on duty again early the following morning.

"There wasn't anything particularly heroic about it that I can see," she said, in a lull between calls. "Somebody had to be here, to answer inquiries and make connections, and see that the other girls did their work smoothly; so I stayed. That was all there was to it."

"You see, I was expecting to go to the picnic. I got down to the dock at exactly 7:30 A.M., just as the Eastland went over. I stayed down for a while, watching the rescue work until finally, seeing that there was nothing I could do, I started home. The crowds were so dense that it took me an hour and a half to get there. When I reached the house, at 12:30, my sister met me at the door and said, 'The Western have been trying to get you on the 'phone. They want you to get down to the plant as soon as you can.'"

"I reached Hawthorne at 1 P.M. Saturday, and went right to work, calling up all the girls I could think of, to help out in the rush that I knew was coming. They came on all sorts of hours and worked all sorts of hours. Miss O'Reilly, for instance, who is here now" - there were only two girls on duty Wednesday night - "went on at 3 P.M. Saturday and worked through until 7:30 Sunday morning. Another girl, Miss Schumacher, went on at 4:30 Sunday afternoon, worked until 7:30 Monday morning, and then went on again from 12 to 3 Monday afternoon."

"I was on duty all day Saturday, from 1:00 P.M. on, all Saturday night, all day Sunday, and Sunday night until 11 o'clock. I came back at 6:30 Monday morning and stayed until 8:45 that night. Tuesday I was on from 6:45 A.M. until 8 P.M. I came on today at 7:30 A.M. and leave at 8 tonight. Tomorrow? Yes, I'll be here at 7:30 in the morning."

"Why have I been on duty so long? Well, it was up to somebody to see that the telephone service here is maintained, and I was

the one. Ordinarily, you see, our supervisor, Miss Brett, would relieve me; but she's away. Poor girl! What I've done is nothing to what she did. Her sister went down on the boat, yet she was one of the first to respond when I called for volunteers. She came here Saturday afternoon and worked for three hours after she had had word that her sister's body had been identified. It was heartbreaking! And she called me up on Sunday and offered to go to work again to help me out. 'Margaret,' she said, 'I'm useless here at home. I can't sleep. I can't think. I can't do anything. Isn't there something I can do?'"

"How could I let her take my place?"

"Busy?" Miss Condon smiled. "I've answered more calls here during the past five days that I'd get ordinarily in a month. Most of them come from the poor people who are trying to get news of friends and relatives who are missing. Some of them are so distracted that they can't even remember the name of the people they're trying to find. It's terrible to sit here and hear them crying for their dead."

"A great many calls, of course, come from inside, from the relief and information committees. Look here" - she opened a drawer in the supervisor's desk and pulled out a thick bundle of little paper slips. "These are slips for the long-distance calls alone that I've had to make since Saturday. There must be over two hundred of them. I haven't even had time yet to check them and copy them in duplicate. That will have to be done later."

"This board of ours is an eighteen position multiple - that is, it had room for eighteen operators. Well, on Monday night, our heaviest night, we had every position at the board occupied, two extra girls operating at the supervisor's desk, and one on the floor! Even then we had all we could do to keep up with the calls. You couldn't hear yourself think."

Miss Condon stopped to make a connection, then leaned back with a sigh of relief. "Well, the heaviest part of the work is over, I think. The calls have been slackening something like a normal schedule. Yes, I've been working pretty hard. But so have the other girls. So has everybody. You see, we don't any of us feel that we're working for ourselves, or even for the company. We're doing what we can to be of some use to the people who were hit by the Eastland disaster. And we're grateful for being able to do even that much."

## FROM A LITTLE FRIEND IN CHICAGO

To the President,  
The Western Electric Company,  
Chicago, Ill.

Many hearts are brought down by this regrettable accident. We all hope the dear ones who have so suddenly passed away to their new home are with our Savior Jesus, who suffered for us all. **I am a boy, twelve years of age**, and I regret the loss of your employees very much.

Yours sincerely,  
Orrin E. Anderson

## WHAT THE SURVIVORS TELL

First, a word of explanation: These are not "hero" stories. There is no intention of offering them as instances of extraordinary heroism. The experiences related here were probably duplicated by hundreds of those who escaped alive from the Eastland. The narrators are Hawthorne employees, picked almost at random, whom a News representative was able to interview during the week of July 26th to August 1st. What follows is offered in the belief that these first-hand narratives will paint a more vivid picture of the Eastland disaster than a volume of second-hand description.

*CC. Kelly, of the Hawthorne Service Department, was only recently transferred there from New York, where he had been fifteen years with the Company. He arrived at Hawthorne exactly one month, to the day, before the wreck of the "Eastland."*

When I first got here, I didn't intend to go to the Hawthorne picnic at all. But everybody seemed to look forward to it so much, and there was so much excitement over it, that I finally changed my mind. It took some time to persuade my wife, for she is rather timid about going in boats; but Harry Thyer's wife laughed at the idea of there being any danger, and finally got her consent.

We decided to go out early and come back early, so that the children wouldn't get home too late. So by quarter past seven Saturday morning we had out seats on the Eastland. There were eight in our party - Harry Thyer, Mrs. Thyer, their two children, a girl, 8, and a boy, 7; and Mrs. Kelly and myself, with our two youngsters, Jenny, 9, and Charlie, who is five.

We all sat on the second deck, as far aft as we could get. Luckily for us, as it afterwards turned out, we were back of the cabin, so we escaped being trapped.

When the boat began to list, I didn't think much of it, for I knew that they often rock like that when they are starting up. And then, all of a sudden, she went over. We all went pretty far under the water, of course. I was the first to come up, and found that we were in a regular cage. The stern rail was on the right, the rear wall of the cabin of the left, and the floor and roof of the deck in front and back. There was a lot of loose stuff floating around, and when my wife came to the surface, she came right up under a heavy chair. She got out from under it somehow, and when I saw her I called, "Where are the children?"

"I don't know," she said. Just then my little girl came up near me. There was no sign of the boy, though, and I had almost given him up when I saw his hand coming up through the water right by me. Maybe I didn't grab it!

All this couldn't have taken half a minute, but it certainly seemed longer. We managed to hold on to an angle iron, and I shouted for help. Before long, they let down ropes and got us out. Mrs. Thyer and her boy were saved; but Harry and the little girl were lost. The girl was sitting holding my daughter by the hand as the boat went over, and I can't imagine how they were separated.

When I got out and looked at my watch, I found it had stopped. I haven't wound it since. It's just as it was then, with the hands pointing to seven thirty-one.

*This is the story of George A. Goyett, who went down with the "Eastland" and was rescued. Mr. Goyett, who is foreman of department 4930, Hawthorne Plant Department, was accompanied by his three sons, all of whom were Hawthorne employees. The two older boys, Lyle, aged 20, and Frank, aged 18, were toolmaking apprentices; they were both saved. The youngest, Charlie, aged 16, was lost. He was an office boy in department 2025. The account below is given as Mr. Goyett told it, at the Hawthorne hospital, on July 29th.*

We got down to the dock rather early. I remember looking at a big clock on a warehouse across the river, as I came out on deck, and noticing that it was just ten minutes past seven. Even then, twenty minutes before sailing time, it was hard to get a good place. I didn't bother to go to the upper decks at all, as I had noticed when we got on that they seemed pretty full. Lyle, the oldest of the boys, stayed downstairs, outside on the dock side of the main deck, talking to some friends. Frank, Charlie, and myself went up to the second deck. Frank went outside, just above where Lyle was standing, on the dock side of the boat. Later, when the boat began to capsize, they simply held on to the rail and climbed out on the upturned side of the boat.

Charlie and I went forward to the ladies' saloon, up in the bow. Charlie went downstairs again, and I went outside to try and find a seat. The dock side and front of the deck were, I knew, so crowded as to be out of the question, so I went around on the river side. It was almost full here.

There were two solid line of occupied chairs, one against the rail and one against the side, down the whole length of the boat; the space between these was filled with people standing and walking around. Seeing that there was no use trying to sit outside, I went back into the saloon. Charlie, who had come upstairs again, was carrying around a little handbag, in which were our bathing suits, towels, and some odds and ends. I told him to take it down to the cloak room and check it, to get it out of the way. "You boys look me up when we get to Michigan City," I told him, "and we'll all have dinner together."

He went below with the bag. I never saw him again.

There was a chair over by the stairway, on the river side, so I went over; it looked like a pretty good spot, so I sat down. Opposite me was Wolcott, foreman of department 4910, with his wife and a friend of hers. They were sitting with their backs to the glass partition that separated the deck and saloon. Just then Miss Kathleen MacIntyre came in, with her mother and little brother. I told Miss MacIntyre to hold my place by the stairs, and went out on the forward deck to get chairs for the rest of her party. When I came back, we all sat down together. There were several other people around that I knew, and we had quite a little group.

I had just about sat down when the boat began to list. It went over so far that my chair slid away from the stair rail, against which I was leaning. I didn't pay much attention to this - simply pushed my chair back again.

Then the Eastland began to go over in earnest. I caught hold of one of the stair posts and managed to keep from sliding.

I looked over to where the people had been sitting on the dock side of the saloon and outer deck. What I saw was exactly what you see when you watch a lot of children rolling down the side of a hill. That entire crowd of men, women and children came slipping and sliding and sprawling down with a mass of lunch boxes, milk bottles, chairs - rubbish of all sort - on top of them.

They came down in a floundering, screaming mass, and, as the boat turned completely over on its side, crashed into the stairs, carrying them away. The whole thing came down on me, of course, and I was carried down to the river side of the saloon, which by this time was full of water. I happened to fall against one of the posts between the glass partitions; otherwise I would have gone right down to the river bottom. Just as I slid down I managed to retain enough presence of mind of jam a handkerchief in my mouth, to keep from swallowing any water. I lay doubled up there, unable to move, for what seemed years, until the water had risen high enough to float the wreckage off me. I probably owe my life to the fact that a chair was jammed in above me which saved me from being crushed under the weight of the others who had fallen down.

I don't remember being frightened - there wasn't time. I know that I was absolutely sure that I was going to be drowned. There didn't seem to be the slightest hope of my being able to get out alive. It sounds like a joke to say that I remembered everything wrong that I had ever done in my past life; that is supposed to be a myth that is always told about drowning people. But that is exactly what happened to me.

At last the pressure began to ease up, and I was able to come up to the surface and keep afloat by treading water. The air pressure in the saloon was fearful, and it was some time before I could breathe properly.

The boat was lying on its port or left side. Consequently, as I floated facing the dock, I had the glass partition forming the starboard wall of the saloon over my head, the ceiling in back of me, the port side and the river bottom under me, and the saloon deck in front of me. I worked my way back until I bumped into the saloon ceiling. This consisted mainly of life preserver racks, so I managed to get my feet on one of the cleats, and, holding on to another, was able to keep my head out of water without treading.

I looked around the saloon. Several people were floating around, alive. Among them were five of our girls. I called to them, and they managed to get over to where I was. By resting their hands on my shoulders they were all able to keep afloat without much exertion; they kept remarkably cool. In fact, the only person who had lost self-control was a poor woman to my left, who was also clinging to the life-preserver racks. Her child had fallen out of her arms when the boat went over, and was somewhere down under the wreckage. She was frantic, and kept screaming, "Where's my baby! Where's my baby!"

Over toward the stairs I caught sight of Wolcott with his wife. I called out to him, "Tom, are you hurt?"

"No, I'm all right," he answered, "she has a piece of railing to hang on to."

Just then the first of the rescuers found us. Someone stuck an oar through the porthole over our heads nearby. The woman who had lost her baby made a grab for it, missed it, and went down. I managed to grab her and get her back beside me, and tried to quiet her.

The only way the rescuers could get at us was by smashing the glass partition over our heads. Of course, all the jagged pieces of glass showered down on top of us, and several of us were cut - I had one of my thumbs gashed; but it was the only thing to do.

They let a rope down with a loop on the end of it, and we threw it over the shoulders of the woman who had gone under before. She was the first one to be pulled out.

When all the women were out I must have caved in all at once. I remember hearing someone call down, "Come out yourself, George." I remember, too, trying to put the rope under my shoulders. I must have succeeded, for the next thing I remember is lying out on the side of the boat with an ambulance surgeon down beside me.

I tried to get up, but found that my right leg wouldn't hold me.

"How do you feel?" the surgeon asked me.

"Pretty good," I said, "but I can't walk."

The surgeon looked me over and said I had a dislocated knee. So a big policeman held on to my upper leg while the surgeon pulled on the lower and snapped the joint into place. It certainly felt fine after it got back!

I felt perfectly well, and said I thought I'd go back and help get some of the other people out.

"Not much you won't," said the surgeon. And before I knew it they had me in an ambulance, on the way to the Iroquois Hospital.

### ***WHAT THE SURVIVORS TELL***

*Continued*

*J.V. Brown, of department 3092, was a member of the photographic committee of the picnic, and was among the last aboard*

*the "Eastland." He was one of the comparatively few to escape of those who were caught on the river side of the lowest deck.*

When I boarded the boat I went over to talk to the inspectors who were checking the people as they came on. I didn't see the actual count, but they told me that there was room for seven hundred more people. They must have been keeping good count, for one of the inspectors said that his count was within nine of the other man's. Considering the crowd, that was mighty close.

I was curious to see whether they actually checked everybody, and stayed there about five minutes. They did. Whenever a woman came through carrying a baby they counted two. I could hear the double clicks of the counters.

At one time the boat was listing so heavily to the starboard (dock) side, owing to the crowds on that side of the decks, that the top of the entrance was within two or three feet of the floor of the dock, so that people couldn't get in. After the boat had straightened up they began to come on board again.

The last on were two girls. I noticed them especially, as they were part of a party of six or eight that was split. After these two were aboard, the inspectors said the boat was full, and refused to let the rest through. The girls wanted to go back, but weren't allowed.

As soon as the gang-plank had been pulled in, Willard and I went in to see the purser about a place to put the cameras. The purser and I left Willard and started toward the engine room. Willard was by the stairway, and Macnutt, who had come up, was standing near him.

The purser and I were about twenty feet from the stairway, on the port (river) side of the boat, when suddenly I saw water begin to come in through the portholes. My first impulse was to jump for the stairs. You can get an idea of how fast the boat went over the fact that I was under water before I could reach them.

My idea was to get up the stairs to the deck above, which was more open. I swam over and started to go up - or rather along - them, for the boat was on her side by this time. But suddenly one of the people in the water grabbed my legs, another got hold of one arm, and a third got me by the hair.

Let me tell you, no man is a hero under water. I fought. I finally got loose - still under water - and managed to get to the top of the stairs. It was pitch black, but off to one side was a lighter streak. I made for that, and shot out of the water as far as my waist. I was in the dancing hall, with a porthole overhead.

Well, to me, I was saved. I had my head out of water, at least. A big armchair was floating by me; I managed to get across that, and coughed up a lot of river water. Suddenly someone grabbed the chair from below. It went down, and never came up. I had to swim again.

There were a good many people in there, most of them girls. Jack Morgan, from the machine shop, was fifteen or twenty feet away. He saved the lives of I don't know how many girls. He had found something to stand on and had a cane with a curved handle. He would reach out with the cane, hook some girl who was floundering around, and pull her in to him. At one time I counted seven hanging on to him.

One of the 2 x 4 posts that enclosed the musicians' stand was out of the water, and there were five girls hanging on to it, all fighting to pull themselves up.

I called out to them, "Girls! For God's sake stop fighting! Keep down and just keep your noses above water, and you'll all be saved." Those girls quieted down like magic. All five finally got out.

All this time I was swimming around - six or seven hours it seemed, although it probably wasn't over ten or fifteen minutes.

The people above had got the portholes open, and threw down life preservers. I managed to get one around each of the five girls, and then tried to get one around myself. Don't let anybody tell you that you can put on a life preserver in the water. I had to give it up, and finally got two, holding one under each arm, like a package.

They started to lower ropes through the portholes. The five girls were hauled up, and then I tried to get the rope around a fellow who had come up near me. He was so crazed with fright that he couldn't help himself, and every time I tried to help him he would try to pull me under. I had to fight him off as best I could, with my arms down at my sides holding my life preservers on.

Finally I got the end of the rope tied in a knot, made him straddle it, told him to hold on, and signaled to them to pull him up. He let go, and dropped back into the water.

I was getting pretty weak, so I put a life preserver on him, took hold of the rope myself, and went up.

When I got out on the side of the boat I couldn't stand. So I sat down and managed to slide down to a tug. Some firemen helped me off, and another fellow took me over to Steel & Wedell's warehouse and got me some hot coffee.

While I was in there I met a man whom I hadn't seen in ten years, who used to go to school with me. He got me a blanket and sent me home in an automobile.

My clothes were in rags where the people had clutched at me on the stairs. They had taken such a tight grip that when I tore loose, their hands simply took out pieces of the cloth. The back of my coat was gone, but some bills were still in my pocket, and my committee badge was still pinned to my lapel.

*Lawrence Kramer is office boy for H.F. Albright, General Superintendent of the Hawthorne Works. Let him tell his experience in his own words.*

I started for the picnic with another kid, who works in department 2063. When we got on the boat we saw how crowded it was, up on the upper decks, so we only went up one flight of stairs, to the second deck. It was pretty crowded even there, but we finally got a couple of chairs over on the river side of the boat. The part of the deck where we sat had walls, so that we weren't out in the open at all. We were sitting near the head of the stairs, at one end of a sort of alley that ran clear across from one side to the other. On the right side of this alley was the wall of one of the inside cabins; on the other side were the stairs, and then came the wall of another cabin.

We noticed that the boat seemed to be tipping over a good deal, but we didn't think much about it until it went clear over. I remember we couldn't keep our feet, and kept slipping back toward the side of the boat. The soda fountain was near where we were, over beyond the stairs, and that broke loose and fell down on a lot of people that were piled up near me.

When I came up out of the water I could see the portholes of the dock side of the boat right over my head. I got over to the wall of the cabin ahead of the stairs, and stood up on that. There were portholes in the side of that cabin too, and you could see the people who were caught inside. They'd come up to the surface of the water, and look at you, and then they'd go down again. Gee, it was awful!

When the boat started to go over, the other kid got over to the other side and hung on to one corner of the cabin that was toward the back of the boat. But a man fell down on top of him and knocked him into the water. After he came up he got over to where I was standing out of the water, and climbed up with me. The ceiling of the deck was behind us, and it had cross beams on it. So we crawled up that. I'd boost him, and he'd pull me up to where he was. When we got up to the top, we could just stick our heads out of the porthole, by reaching over. The other kid went through, and then I got hold of the edge of the porthole and swung over. There was a bench under the porthole, and I got one foot on that, and that steadied me.

I managed to get half way through the porthole, and then a fireman pulled me through the rest of the way.

## ***IN MEMORIUM, JULY 24, 1915***

*By a Survivor*

Eagerly, onward we hurried  
A gay, happy, holiday throng,  
To catch the first boat was out effort,  
While anxiously trudging along.  
" 'Tis filled: We are going to miss it."  
"Oh, no, they'll take on a few more."  
And down the white plank we went gliding  
Precious, human freight from the shore.

All aboard: Above the gay chatter  
We heard the deep ominous call.  
For the last mysterious journey  
We're aboard, - God pity us all!  
A few precious moments we stood there,  
Busy talking or clasping a hand,  
While smiling some one was speaking  
These words: "We will meet when we land."

Shall we meet when we land, I wonder?  
I hope so, my friend, bye and bye:  
You were swallowed up in the struggle,  
I was grasped when ready to die.  
O'er the bust scene at the harbor  
Rose a cry from a thousand throats,  
The agonized shrieks of the dying  
And the sobs from out sister-boats.

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Dear bereaved, take heart in your sorrow,  
Tho' the load is heavy to-day,  
You will meet again some to-morrow,  
They have gone just over the way,  
May our lives be nobler and better  
For this dark, bitter hour of pain.  
Take heart, my dear friend in the dawning  
We shall meet out loved ones again.

*Ida O. Anderson, Hawthorne July 27, 1915 .*

### **WORDS OF SYMPATHY FROM ABROAD**

The accompanying cablegrams from our allied houses in Milan and Buenos Aires are typical of the messages that came from all of our allied houses and our friends outside of America. A few of these are reproduced below.

#### **From London:**

"The directors, staff and employees of London House send expression of keenest sympathy with Western Electric Company and with bereaved relatives in their terrible loss."

(Signed) **W.E. CO., Ltd., London**

"London employees hasten to express deepest sympathy with Hawthorne at terrible Eastland disaster."

(Signed) Stein, London

#### **From Paris:**

"We are painfully impressed by the terrible catastrophe which has befallen our colleagues and friends of the Western Electric Company. We send you our condolences and deepest sympathy."

(Signed) **Le Material Telephonique**

#### **From Montreal:**

"Please accept deepest sympathy from us all on this terribly sad occasion."

(Signed) **Edward F. Sise**

#### **From Johannesburg:**

"Condict, convey Hawthorne sympathy Johannesburg staff and customers in terrible disaster." (Signed) E.S. Keefe

#### **From Buenos Aires:**

"Greatly shocked catastrophe. Deepest sympathy."

(Signed) J.E. Parker, Gen'l Mgr., **United River Plate Tel. Co., Ltd.**

#### **From the Far East:**

San Francisco, July 25.

"Express our deepest grief and sympathy to the catastrophe of the picnic party of Hawthorne works."

(Signed) S. Kiguchi, M. Matsushiro, E. Hata

(Employees of the **Nippon Electric Company**, en route to Japan.)

"I have read of the Eastland disaster in the newspapers and know that the tragedy concerns families of your company's employees of Chicago. I am very sorry and deeply sympathize with them in this great calamity.

With heartfelt sympathy, believe me,

Yours very sincerely,"

(Signed) T. Matsumoto

## **Engineer of the Japanese Government**

### ***From our Representatives in China:***

"In behalf of our firm we hasten to express our profound sorrow and deep sympathy in the loss sustained by your Company as a result of the appalling disaster in Chicago, whereby the lives of so many employees and their families have been sacrificed.

Sincerely yours,"

(Signed) **Arnhold, Karberg and Company**

### ***From the Representative of Two German Companies:***

"My dear Mr. Thayer:

I read with deep regret of the disastrous accident in Chicago through which such a great number of your employees and their families have perished. Will you therefore permit me to express my profound sympathy also in the name of my firm.

Respectfully,"

Dr. Karl Georg Frank

Representing **Siemens & Halske and Siemens-Schuckert Werke** of Berlin

### ***From Ecuador:***

"You have our sympathy on account of the disaster."

(Signed) **Compania Nacional de Telefonos**

### ***From San Salvador:***

Regret misfortune.

(Signed) Ricardo Posada.

**Direct Gen'l of Government Telephone and Telegraph Lines.**

## ***COUNTRYWIDE EXPRESSIONS OF SYMPATHY***

As soon as word of the disaster flashed over the country, messages of condolence began to pour in to all of our offices. The accompanying telegram from the chairman of the Board of Directors of the **Pacific States Telephone & Telegraph Company** was one of the first received, and is typical of all that followed.

The **General Electric Company, Westinghouse Electric Company, and Wagner Electric Company** early sent messages of sympathy. From other companies in the electrical industry and from corporations all over the United States not directly associated with our business came hundreds of telegram and letters of condolence, many of them offering or extending financial assistance. Lack of space alone prevents the reproduction of these letters. In every case they were acknowledged by an officer of the Company, and where checks were enclosed, they were at once endorsed over to Mayor Thompson's relief committee in Chicago.

Many sympathetic telegrams and letters came from old employees of the Company in all parts of the country.

From local electrical and telephone societies and Jovian leagues throughout the country came like messages of sympathy. The employees of the **Gamewell Fire Alarm Telegraph Company**, of Newton Upper Falls, Mass., were at their annual outing on July 24th when news of the disaster reached them. They at once dispatched a message of sympathy to the employees at Hawthorne. The officers and employees of the **Stromberg Carlson Telephone Manufacturing Company and the Automatic Electric Company** also sent assurances of their sympathy. Another message of special interest came from the **Western Pennsylvania Independent Telephone Association**, in session at Johnstown, Pa.

*From the **Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Company**. One of the First of the Telegrams.*

Letters and telegrams of condolence were received by the Hawthorne Club from the following: **Boston Western Electric Club; Telephone Society of Charlotte, N.C.; Telephone Society of Atlanta; Telephone Society of Louisville, Ky.; Telephone Society of New Orleans; Telephone & Telegraph Society of New England, Springfield, Mass.; Telephone Society of Nashville, Tenn.; the Jovian Order.**

The distributing houses were notified of the extent of the disaster by Vice-President Halligan, and the attached letter from Dallas is typical of the replies which he received. In several cases the employees passed formal resolutions of condolence, while **at San Francisco a special Mass, requested by Mrs. W.S. Berry, was held in old St. Mary's cathedral. It was attended by San Francisco employees of all denominations.**

**All of our offices in America remained closed on Wednesday, July 28th**, the day designated by the city of Chicago as the official day of mourning for the Eastland victims.

## NEW YORK'S SHARE IN THE WORK

The first intimation of the disaster came to F.B. Jewett, Assistant Chief Engineer, shortly before 9 o'clock Saturday morning. The message said simply that it was rumored that a number of Western Electric people were on the boat. Knowing that the Hawthorne picnic was scheduled for that day, Mr. Jewett and the other officials, who quickly joined him in his office, were apprehensive of bad news; and their worst fears were realized when a few moments later a brief confirmation of the overturning of the boat was received. The earliest reports indicated only a few casualties, but as the morning wore on, the number was gradually increased.

Inside of a few minutes after the first news was received, Mr. Jewett had organized an information bureau at New York, and arranged for the use of an **A.T.&T. wire for special telephone and telegraph facilities between his office and the A.T.&T. office in Chicago. Later on this line was extended from the long distance office in Chicago to the dock**, so that New York had information up-to-the-minute.

Mr. Jewett took charge of the work at New York, and the suite of offices occupied by Mr. Scribner, Chief Engineer; Mr. McQuarrie, Assistant Chief Engineer, and Mr. Jewett, were turned over to the force of assistants who started tabulating the information as fast as it was received.

Mr. Jewett first telephoned the news to **President Thayer** at his home in New Canaan, Connecticut, and then to **Vice-President Halligan**, who was spending the weekend at the summer home of R.H. Gregory, Comptroller, in Princeton, Massachusetts.

As soon as the extent of the disaster was realized, **both officials took immediate steps to catch the Twentieth Century, Limited train for Chicago.**

As soon as the bulletin boards of the New York papers began to post early news, calls began to come in from all over the metropolitan district, seeking information of friends and relatives. A card record was made of every inquiry, and if the information was not at hand, it was secured from Chicago and the inquirer promptly notified.

The large number of former New York shop employees who had moved to Hawthorne during the past few years left behind them a vast circle of friends and relatives; and at times there were several telephone lines busy simply handling inquiries of this kind.

Bulletins of information were issued by Mr. Street, and posted on the bulletins boards in the New York office, which were surrounded by an eager throng of friends and fellow employees.

The information bureau also issued authorized statements of the disaster to the New York press, the information secured over the Company's private wire being invariably later than that received through the usual channels through which news is gathered by the papers.

All of the officials remaining at New York and a large number of other employees volunteered for special duty in connection with the bureau, which remained open continuously day and night until noon on Saturday, July 31st. As a matter of fact, there were many more volunteers than the work in hand demanded.

During the first part of the week the telephone lines were quite busy at night as during the day, and the all-night telephone service between New York and Chicago enabled the bureau at New York to answer these inquires almost as soon as they were received. A force of stenographers were on hand for the necessary typewriting work.

This bureau handled the eastern end of the arrangements necessary for the transportation of those bodies that were to be buried in the East; and looked after the funeral arrangements in many cases and the measures of financial relief that were made necessary in each case.

### ***IN MEMORIAM***

We cannot ease your anguish or your pain,  
Mere words your sacred grief could never gild,  
The voices that you loved; - forever stilled,  
Would comfort you, - but ours we know are vain,  
So if with aching hearts we dumbly stand  
In reverent silence: - know the words we lack  
An avalanche of sympathy hold back.

All we can do is clasp you by the hand.

And yet we know, that though the hour is dark,  
A light still shines, and through the blinding tears  
Hope sees a star, - and listening love shall hark  
To gentle sounds that come to soothe its fears,  
Calmed by the rustle of the Angels' wings  
Both death and desolation lose their stings.

*From the Employees of the People's Gas Light & Coke Co., Chicago.*

## **A TRIBUTE TO OUR HAWTHORNE DEAD**

If you could see the flag, as now it waves  
Above our building, reaching out to sea;  
And now, in half-mast glory looking down  
Upon the Hudson, restful, sparkling, sad;  
If you could see that flag against the sky,  
The half-mast flag that breathes what we would say;  
That seems to silence all the world around;  
Then you would know of how a wondrous rest.

\_\_\_\_\_Has stolen o'er

\_\_\_\_\_Our Hawthorne Dead

If you could see, as we, from nearby roof,  
The sky that holds its true-blue promise out;  
The soft white clouds that pass as happy souls;  
The way the Hudson seems to droop beneath  
The deep reproach this kinsman-flag throws out;  
Or feel its whisper speak of wearied hearts  
That now at last lie soothed: you, too, would raise  
Your arm, unknowingly, in a grave salute, --

\_\_\_\_\_ As tribute to

\_\_\_\_\_ Our Hawthorne Dead

*Nina Joy Gerbaulet*

*Claire K. Gerbaulet*

*New York, July 28, 1915.*

## **THRENODY**

July 24, 1915

Hoarse siren, which so oft to toil didst urge -

\_\_\_\_\_ Moan for them!

Ye saddened bells, now sound a solemn dirge -

\_\_\_\_\_ Toll for them!

And Heaven above us, in our grief and pain,

Send down your dreary rain -

\_\_\_\_\_ Weep for them!

*L. Houghton, Chicago.*