

## Commemorative Ceremony Honoring the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the *Eastland* Disaster

A special commemorative service will be held in honor of the 844 people who perished on July 24, 1915 in the *Eastland* Disaster. With this year marking the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the *S.S. Eastland* Disaster, it is fitting to pay tribute to the men, women and children who lost their lives that fateful day. This tragedy affected so many people – mothers, fathers, husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, co-workers, friends, witnesses and rescuers, who carried this catastrophe with them all their lives – each coping in the only way they knew how. Many never shared the story with their family so now

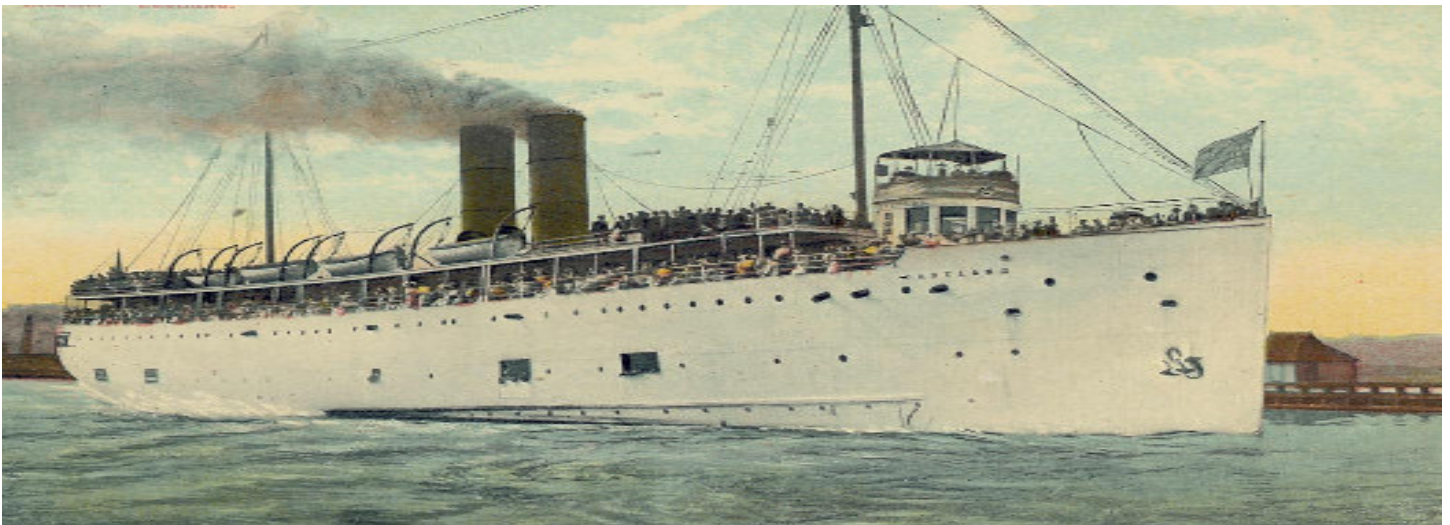
those families are searching for answers. Others never wanted people to forget.

The *S.S. Eastland Fellowship Authority's* Commemorative Ceremony will pay homage to those who perished and to those left with their stories. Appropriately Concordia Cemetery was selected for this year's dedication. Rather than visiting the site of the disaster, the *S. S. Eastland Fellowship Authority* concluded the final resting place of some victims was an honorable location to remember the *S. S. Eastland* Disaster.

Join the Center for History and members of the *Eastland Fellowship Authority* on Sunday, July 24, 2005, at 11 a.m. for a memorable tribute at Concordia Cemetery, 7900 West Madison, Forest Park.

The Service will begin at the Manthey family plot. The Manthey family, like so many families, lost family members while others survived and witnessed the catastrophe.

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*Eastland* music will be played honoring the memories of those who lost their lives 90 years ago.

Gary Neubieser, Concordia Cemetery Manager will comment on the impact of the *Eastland* Disaster and direct guests to other graves, which will be identified with a commemorative marker.

The Ceremony will continue in the mausoleum with personal recollections from family members of victims.

Dave Nelson, Center for History Board Member and founder of the *Rose & Dave Nelson Eastland Collection*, will talk about the permanent *Eastland* exhibit which will open in August.

The first annual *S.S. Eastland Fellowship Authority* Reunion will begin after the Commemorative Service (see Reunion article).

## First Annual *S.S. Eastland Fellowship Authority* Reunion



Everyone is invited to the First Annual *S.S. Eastland Fellowship Authority* Reunion July 24 at Concordia Cemetery, 7900 West Madison in Forest Park, following the 90<sup>th</sup> *Eastland* Anniversary Service.

The Reunion is an occasion for family and friends affected by the *S.S. Eastland* disaster to come together and meet other *Eastland* Family members. It is a time to share personal stories of that disastrous day in 1915. Repeating the stories so they can be passed on from family to family and generation to generation is a precious gift. It is a history that must be remembered and preserved – a goal of the Center for History.



The Center for History is the only institution with a permanent *Eastland* exhibit and has the largest collection of *Eastland* memorabilia in the nation. It is dedicated to advancing the *Eastland* story and preserving the memories.

*Eastland* Family members will be treated to a display of *Eastland* memorabilia, including a list of the victims, along with a light lunch at the Reunion. The *S.S. Eastland Fellowship Authority* Family Reunion is free for its member and \$10 for non-members. Kindly make reservations by calling 630-682-9472 or emailing [info@eastlandauthority.org](mailto:info@eastlandauthority.org)

## Expansion Calls for New Name

**CENTER FOR HISTORY**  
A Facility of the Wheaton Historic Preservation Council

Center for History, A Facility of the Wheaton Historic Preservation Council is the new name of the museum. Wheaton Historic Preservation Council was incorporated in 1980 as a 501(c)(3) organization. At that time the organization did not own a facility, so when a museum opened at 606 North Main Street, it became the Wheaton History Center. Now, even with the Research Annex on Naperville Road, an expansion is necessary to serve our ever-growing public. So 315 West Front Street, Second Floor has been secured to house exhibits, research office, collections, programming space and offices for staff.

The Board of Directors felt the name Center for History better identified its mission *to inspire an appreciation of and preserve the heritage of Wheaton and its connection to national and world history*. The *Eastland* story is a major part of the Center's mission.



*Raising the Eastland*

## Dedicated to Preserving the Precious Artifacts of the *S.S. Eastland*

The Center for History's *Eastland Collection* containing the *Dave & Rose Nelson Eastland Collection* and other items donated to the Center makes it the largest collection of historic *S.S. Eastland* memorabilia in the nation. As a repository and research facility with professional staff, the *Eastland Collection* is always accessible to the public. Staff has already assisted *Eastland* family members, researchers, and students in their quest for information. To further the preservation of the *Eastland* story, the Center for History welcomes new stories, photographs, newspapers or documents, publications, and artifacts relating to the *Eastland* or Western Electric. Staff is also actively recording oral histories with family  
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## Permanent Home for *Eastland* Exhibit

The Center for History is pleased to announce the opening of a permanent exhibit that will be a home for *S.S. Eastland* artifacts, memorabilia and personal stories in its new facility at 315 West Front Street, Wheaton. The *Eastland Story* will be the only exhibit of its kind that will always be available to the friends and family of the *Eastland* disaster as well as historians and people interested in this fascinating piece of history.

The replica of the *Eastland* wheel house will be the basis for the exhibit as stories and artifacts rotate periodically. This rotation will create an ever changing exhibit of the *Eastland Story*. Scheduled to open mid-September, the Center for History's *Eastland Story* exhibit will chronicle the experiences of the victims, survivors, heroes and witnesses and be a permanent home for their stories.

Donations and funds from *S.S. Eastland Fellowship Authority* memberships are welcome to help develop this new exhibit. For additional information contact Alberta Adamson, CFRE at 630-665-8366 or [aadamson@wheatonhistory.com](mailto:aadamson@wheatonhistory.com).



## *Mailing Compliments of Fifth Third Bank*

members to capture the memories that have been handed down in the family.

If you have any memorabilia or oral stories, the Center for History can guarantee they will be preserved and shared for generations yet to come. Call Wendy Miller, Collections and Education Director, or Jamie Kelly, Registrar, if you would like your family's history preserved, to donate an item, or for research at 630-871-6601 or [info@eastlandauthority.org](mailto:info@eastlandauthority.org).

### **Frank Jeffers** ***Eastland Hero***

Frank Jeffers was a bridgetender, raising and lowering the bridge that spanned the Chicago River, near the excursion



boat moorings. It was misty and damp the morning of July 24, 1915, as the *S.S. Eastland* listed from side to side, finally rolling over, lying on its side on the silty bottom of the dirty river. Frank, an excellent swimmer – something of a special skill in 1915, left his post on the bridge and set out to be of assistance. His efforts that day meant life to over 20 people he helped to safety.

Frank was one of the heroes of July 24 and his courageousness was rewarded when he was presented with one of the Cook County Coroner's commemorative stars. The Coroner's stars were specially crafted with an image of the capsized *Eastland* engraved on the front and given to those people whose efforts were truly heroic during a horrific disaster.

Now, 90 years later, Frank's descendents are proud of his courageous actions and the descendents of those he saved, thankful for his bravery.