

The Ghosts - **Recovering the Dead**

City officials, arriving at the wharf, swiftly ordered makeshift morgues set up. It was decided that a large abandoned military armory* would serve as one.

For hours, boats circled the water near the Eastland looking for bodies. It was a slow agonizing process as there were countless bodies needing to be pulled from the water. For several days, deep sea divers struggled through mounds of debris hoping to locate any additional bodies trapped on the river bottom. It was dangerous work. More than once, a diver would have to surface quickly or die when oxygen tubes became twisted and air was cut off. Thankfully, no further fatalities occurred to add to the number of dead.

Recovered bodies were loaded on trucks, ambulances, and horse and buggy lined up waiting to move them to the temporary morgues. By mid-afternoon, a mass of unidentified bodies lined the armory floor. Next, came the grim task of identifying the dead and reuniting families for burial.



Of the estimated 2,500 passengers and crew members on board, 844 people lost their lives, including crew members and 22 entire families.

When the S.S. Eastland was salvaged, rumors of a haunting quickly spread.

Shortly after the disaster, the Eastland was raised to be sold. It was subsequently moved near the Halsted Street Bridge. It was then that rumors the ship was haunted began. At night, people crossing the Halsted Bridge near the Eastland ship , always did so hurriedly.

The assigned caretaker, Captain M.L. Edwards (not the Eastland's captain), lived on board the ship. Edwards claimed he was awakened nightly by moaning sounds and loud banging noises. For sanity's sake, he attributed the sounds to the boat's waterlogged damage. In fact, Edwards later reported to newspapers, he was very glad to move off the ship. In December of 1915 , the US Navy** bought the ship and it served in various naval capacities for the next three decades. Finally, the rickety Eastland met its own death in 1945 when sold for scrap.

Strange sights and sounds have been reported in the area of the disaster.

Pedestrians walking past the disaster site, report hearing sounds of loud splashing often accompanied by chilling screams and moans. Incredibly, when peering into the river from the overlook, the water is calm.

Additionally, frequenters of riverside cafes that line the disaster site, occasionally witness inexplicable surges of water flood the river walk. Could this be a residual replay of water thrown on the lower docks when the Eastland rolled over? Furthermore, paranormal claims from folks taking a casual stroll along the river are often reported. These include seeing unusual activity in the water. Upon closer inspection, they're shocked by the reflections of faces with lifeless eyes staring up at them.



What the disaster site looks like today.