



AMERICA WE THANK YOU

An Armenian Tribute to Near East Relief

CONNECTICUT FACT SHEET

Connecticut was a staunch supporter of Near East Relief (NER), the American-led campaign that quickly sparked an international response with its unprecedented humanitarian endeavor, mobilizing all segments of American citizenry including elected officials, celebrities and laypersons alike, to help rescue victims of the Armenian Genocide in Ottoman Turkey from 1915-1930.



- Connecticut facilitated its NER efforts from its state office headquarters located at the Strand Theater Building at 1003 Main Street in Hartford.

- On February 6, 1920, *The Spanish American* ran the following story, “Women Adopt 10,000 orphans: Connecticut to provide Foster Mothers for Little Victims of Turks.”

- The decision to adopt and sponsor the 10,000 orphans was made during an NER regional meeting held in Hartford, presided by Connecticut Governor Marcus H. Holcomb, wherein representatives from over 300 women’s organizations convened to take immediate action in response to urgent NER appeals to raise funds.

- In December 1920 alone, Connecticut residents generously contributed \$44,447.84 in response to NER’s Christmas Appeal Giving Campaign to ensure food, shelter and medicine to the orphans overseas.

- As the need to care for the hundreds and thousands of rescued orphans in the Near East grew, U.S. President Warren Harding initiated an Emergency Committee of the NER tasked to amplify fundraising efforts for critical resources. In response to this appeal in 1922, a consolidated fundraising effort between residents of Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island yielded an additional \$10,000 gift. State representatives met at the auditorium of the missionary education movement in New York to set further fundraising initiatives to meet the Emergency Committee’s needs.



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- As the stories of the Armenian orphans overseas captured the hearts and minds of the American citizenry, even schoolchildren yearned to help. A touching example of this is displayed through a story reported in the *New Near East*, which was NER's official publication and boasted a readership of over 100,000 persons a month. It was noted that 25 schoolchildren in a little Connecticut school each brought in a dime and collectively contributed \$2.50 for the well-being of the orphans. Their teacher was so pleased by their gesture that she happily matched her students' thoughtful donations.
- In its September 1923 issue the *New Near East* reported on the August 10 NER meeting that had been scheduled months in advance in New Canaan, Connecticut. And although President Warren Harding's funeral was scheduled for the same day, Connecticut residents agreed that given the philanthropic nature of the critical gathering which President Harding himself so earnestly supported, that the meeting should not be postponed.
- The meeting was held at the Congregational Church and its pastor introduced Miss Caroline Sillman who had recently returned from her travel overseas having visited the NER orphanages and hospitals, to present NER's film reel entitled "Constructive Forces," which depicted actual scenes from the rescue and rehabilitation efforts made possible by the unprecedented American philanthropy to which Connecticut gave wholeheartedly.

Connecticut, We Thank You!

Thanks to the generosity of the Near East Relief, its participating organizations and entities, the U.S. Government and State Governments, and especially the American people at large, over 1,000,000 refugees and 132,000 orphans of the Armenian Nation and other Christian minorities were rescued, fed, clothed, and educated. We have survived, thrived, and prospered from the horrors of Genocide at the hands of Ottoman Turkey.

For your unwavering support and unprecedented generosity in donating to Near East Relief's humanitarian efforts, Connecticut, We Thank You!



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