



**AMERICA
WE THANK YOU**
An Armenian Tribute to Near East Relief

LOUISIANA
**FACT
SHEET**

Louisiana was an integral 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.



- Louisiana coordinated its NER efforts through neighboring Alabama's state office headquarters located at 2027 Age Herald Building in Birmingham.

- The Tensas Gazette of St. Joseph, Louisiana in its July 29, 1921 issue published a letter from the President of the Republic of Armenia, Hamo Ohandjanian, to Charles V. Vickrey, General Secretary of Near East Relief, appealing for 50,000 tons of flour to save Armenia from starvation. Food crisis was critical due to the Turkish invasion of Armenia and the fact that 100,000 peaceful Armenian inhabitants of the cities of Kars and Sarikamish had to flee their homes and were living as refugees in the interior of Armenia.

- The above mentioned paper also printed a letter from Petty Officer George Porter of Racine, Wisconsin to his family describing the conditions in Batum and Trebizond. Stating that "people are dying off little by little...there are relief workers but they don't seem to be able to take care of them all. The relief workers are nearly dead from

work... and the refugees do not stop praising the Americans." The letter also mentioned that the Turks completely wiped out these towns and massacred all Armenians over fifteen years of age.

- The Era-Leader of Franklinton, Louisiana, published articles focusing on NER's critical work overseas. These articles included stories of Armenian girls rescued by NER from Turkish harems after years of servitude and the impressive reduction in death rates in the City of Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, from 1000 per day to 20 per day as a result of NER's invaluable medical treatment and food distribution of food. The article made an urgent appeal for more donations to save more afflicted refugees and orphans.



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- The Tensas Gazette of St Joseph, Louisiana, reported in 1921 that the annual report of NER showed distribution of \$60,000,000 in cash and supplies by American people to salvaging of the Christian people of the Near East. The most important part of NER's work was saving of over 110,000 orphans per this report. Mr. Charles V. Vickrey, General Secretary of NER, also noted that only 2.8 million Armenians remained in the Near East compared to the pre-war population of more than 4 million. From the survivors half would have perished if not for help given by the American people.
- The Era-Leader in Franklinton, Louisiana, ran an article in the December 1919 issue with the title of "An American \$2 Bill Did This" wherein it explained how an American man or woman's \$2 contribution helped Near East Relief to take in a motherless, fatherless, homeless, nameless three year old Armenian orphan and feed and take care of the child. The article appealed to the public stating that there were more than quarter million other little victims of Turkish cruelty and oppression knocking on the doors of Near East Relief orphanages and many more American \$2 bills were needed to take them in.
- The Era-Leader in Franklinton, Louisiana, ran an article explaining the real subject of a Near East Relief poster, with the caption of "Give the boy a chance; 249,999 other homeless orphans like him", showing a forlorn little fellow, with hunger-stricken cheeks, hopeless mouth and frail, starving body taken to a Near East orphanage where it was found that his only earthly possession was a patched blanket of burlap bag that he was wearing.
- The little boy was photographed by Dr. Milton S. Littlefield of the Near East Relief, and the official poser circulated by NER is on the front of this fact sheet.

Louisiana, 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 critical reporting, which informed the American public and the world of the atrocities befalling the Armenians during and in the immediate aftermath of the Armenian Genocide perpetrated by Ottoman Turkey, and for duly publicizing the Near East Relief's appeals to continue its humanitarian work in the region, Louisiana, We Thank You!



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