



# AMERICA WE THANK YOU

An Armenian Tribute to Near East Relief

# MASSACHUSETTS FACT SHEET

Massachusetts 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.



*Mrs. Ella Thomas of Framingham, Massachusetts, who is giving all her time to making clothes and dressing dolls for the children of the Near East.*

- Massachusetts facilitated its NER efforts from its state headquarters located at 1218 Little Building in Boston.

- In December 1920 alone, the residents of Massachusetts raised an incredible sum of \$43,628.70 in response to NER's Annual Christmas Giving Appeal.

- Robert L. O'Brien, editor-in-chief of *The Boston Herald*, sent NER a check for \$100 in response to the Massachusetts' special Christmas Appeal in 1923. He printed the appeals in his columns and authored a heartfelt editorial as he was convinced that that every man should do his utmost for the genuinely needy, and thus contributed still another \$100.

- The September 1923 issue of *The New Near East*, NER's official publication, which boasted a monthly readership of over 100,000

persons, featured Mrs. Ella Thomas (photo above) of Framingham, Massachusetts, describing her as a gentle elderly lady who donated her precious time to the work of preparing children's garments and toys, filling huge packing cases, which she lovingly sent overseas, thus mothering by proxy scores of orphaned boys and girls.

- An admirable citizen of Massachusetts was little Eleanor Lydon who brought all she had, 225 pennies, to the NER state offices in Boston, which she said was her gift "for the Poor Little Armenian Orphans." She had heard the story of a little Armenian boy in Harput who could not be admitted to an already full orphanage and died of starvation a few days later. Eleanor rolled her allowance of pennies until she had 225 of them and gave NER all she had.



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- Massachusetts' NER headquarters in Boston started a campaign by asking the public to match their dollars with Eleanor's pennies.
- Child actor Jackie Coogan left Hollywood, California, and stopped at a number of cities on his way to Boston to collect milk, clothing and non-perishable food to be included in the million-dollar cargo of the ship he was "piloting" to be taken to the orphaned children of Near East. Every school child in the United States was asked to bring contributions to the collection points. The ship left Boston on its voyage to Greece, Syria, Armenia and the Holy Land.
- The people of Massachusetts donated not only their hard-earned dollars to the efforts of NER, but also traveled overseas as volunteers and NER field workers. One such person was Mr. Milton D. Brown of Malden, Massachusetts, who had received his education at Carnegie Institute and Columbia University. He was the director of orphanages and schools in the Caucasus from 1920-1922. In 1923 Mr. Brown returned to Alexandropol, which was known as "Orphan City" because of the over 30,000 Armenian orphans housed there, to direct industrial training in the orphanages.
- Among the number of organizations whose assistance was vital to the efforts of NER, was the support garnered by American women's colleges. The February 1921 issue of *The New Near East* reported that Wellesley College maintained a unit of five workers in Constantinople, supplying equipment and allowance for workers amounting to about \$15,000; Smith College maintained a unit of four persons, paying all expenses, and equipping the NER hospital in Malatia with a cost of \$8,000 and Mt. Holyoke College sent \$3,000 to support NER missions overseas.

## **Massachusetts, 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, Massachusetts, We Thank You!



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