



R00932 76307

Chicago Bank (Chicago)

Disasters

*Curio file  
"C" - Chicago*

2

# THE COLVMNS

OF  
THE ILLINOIS TRUST & SAVINGS BANK  
CHICAGO



REFERENCE DEPT.

VERTICAL FILE

SPECIAL ISSUE

21,  
JULY, 1919

CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY  
MUNICIPAL REFERENCE COLLECTION

**M**Y sincere, heartfelt sympathy goes out to the Mothers, Fathers, Sisters, Brothers, and all of you who were close to the ten faithful and competent employes who met their death in so unusual and unexpected a manner a few days since in our bank. Nothing that I can say will bring back the dead, but any and every thing that I can do for those who were injured will not be left undone. This has been a great shock to me personally, and I need not express to you how deeply I feel it. While my personal relations with these employes were not close, I have and always have had a deep interest in the welfare of all our employes, and feel when a calamity of this kind befalls them, it is like taking members of my own family. I extend to you my sincere sympathy in your great loss.

JOHN J. MITCHELL,  
PRESIDENT.

For Reference only

## THE COLVMNS

SPECIAL ISSUE

JULY, 1919

PUBLISHED IN HONOR OF THOSE WHO LOST  
THEIR LIVES WHILE AT THEIR WORK IN  
THE BANK IN A CATASTROPHE THAT LEFT ALL  
OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES GRIEF STRICKEN.

ED SHANKS, EDITOR.

ILLINOIS TRUST AND SAVINGS BANK, CHICAGO

### The Great Tragedy

**O**UT of the clear sky came a mass of flaming wreckage which crashed through the big skylight of this Bank, bringing death and injury into the Illinois Trust family. A big dirigible sailing over the loop caught fire a thousand feet in the air and came rushing like a flaming comet, down to earth. The finger of Fate had selected the skylight of this building among the hundreds of flat roofs surrounding, on which the dirigible was to strike.

This great tragedy resulted in the death of ten of the Bank's people and the injury of twenty-seven others, leaving a never to be forgotten shadow over the entire institution.

Employes and officers were busy closing up the day's business on July 21st. It had been a big day. Monday almost invariably brings more business than other days of the week. Many of the employes already were on their way home. Those still at work were putting the final touches on the day's work and would have departed for home very shortly.

Suddenly, as if the whole roof was caving in, there came a big crash and down through the skylight descended the huge, fiery blimp with its twisted iron and heavy mechanism, past the balcony and down to the first floor upon the heads of employes who were working underneath the large skylight.

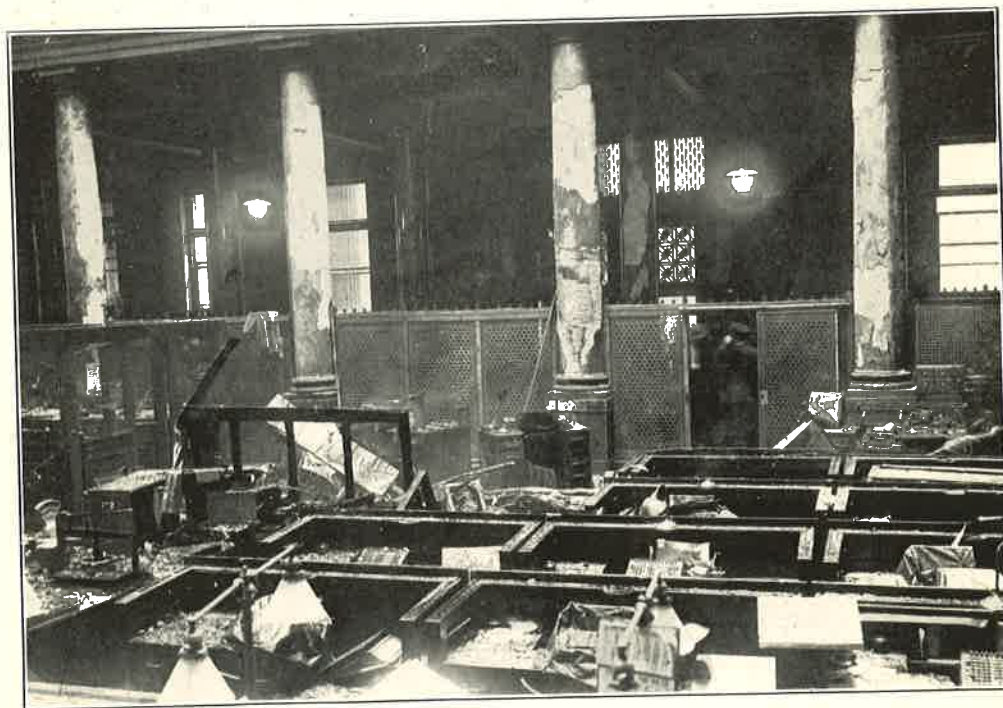


## THE COLUMNS

Sadness and anxiety have reigned in the Bank since that terrible moment, for all the people in this organization are as one family—faithful, friendly, loyal, companionable, and helpful to each other. Sadness, because death's toll called many of our faithful people. Anxiety, because of the serious condition of many of the injured.

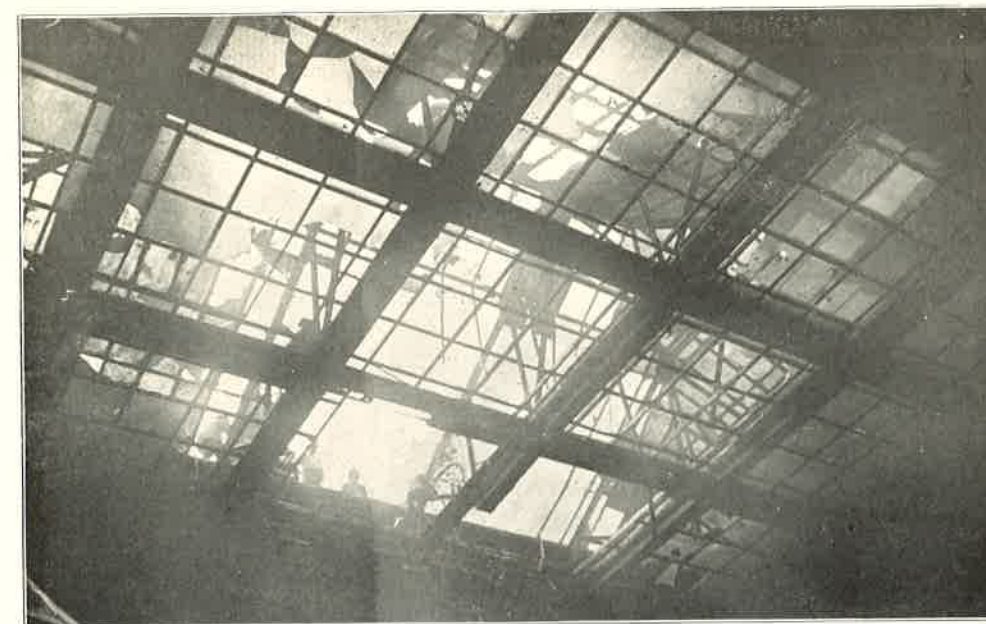
The city pronounces it a tragedy as hideous and weird as ever shocked Chicago. The Bank's history will record only the human side of it all—the tearing away of lives leaving a vacancy in our hearts, the sorrowful families left behind, the suffering injured, the kindness of friends in the Bank's sadness, and the bravery and loyalty of all the Bank's people.

These are the greater things which remain uppermost in the minds of Officers and Employees.



*The wreckage came crashing down to the first floor on the heads of the Bank's people. Officers' quarters are just beyond the bronze doors.*

## THE COLUMNS



*Heavy motors, gondola, gasoline tanks and other debris snapped the steel frame work of the skylight.*

## Cause of the Disaster

THOUSANDS of eyes were attracted skyward as the beautiful, silvery dirigible balloon gracefully sailed over the loop. It was a ship with exceptional speed, of the army blimp type, equipped with aeroplane rotary motors.

The splendid appearance and graceful maneuvering of the airship at least lent an impression of safety.

It was approximately 4:55 o'clock when the giant, silky egg, after passing over the Post Office, was seen to have a spurt of flame at one end of the gas bag. In an instant the entire ship seemed to quiver and buckle, then came the swift plunge earthward. The same thousands who watched the shiny ship in its graceful sailing saw it go crashing into the skylight of this Bank.

The hundred and fifty Bank people

still at work in the building could be given no warning of the coming catastrophe. A shadow was seen to flash across the skylight, followed instantly by a terrific crash. The steel supports holding the big skylight snapped with the force of the two heavy rotary motors, the gondola, the gasoline tanks and other wreckage, all of which went tearing into the midst of the Bank's people on the main floor, bringing so suddenly, great loss of life, injury, sorrow and destruction.

The dirigible balloon was the property of the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, Akron, Ohio. It was being used for advertising and experimental purposes.

A number of theories concerning the origin of the flame were advanced, but opinions differed as to the exact cause.



## THE COLUMNS

### Ten Bank People Meet Death While At Work



*A minute before the disaster employees were peacefully at their work.*

**W**HILE faithful employees were peacefully at work, putting the finishing touches on the day's business, the great catastrophe came and left death in its path.

The mechanism which dropped was so heavy that it is believed death was instantaneous in most cases, although the flaming gasoline which spread burned many of the bodies buried in the debris.



**MAREA FLORENCE**  
*Died July 21, 1919*

**H**ARDLY a day passed but that Miss Florence would unconsciously exhibit her athletic ability by out-walking one of her friends at the Bank on the way from the station to this building. She will be missed by them and by all others who came in contact with her at the Bank.

Miss Florence was particularly fond of outdoor life and all athletic activities. Especially did she like canoeing and swimming.

She came with the Bank July 26, 1917, and was pronounced a splendid worker. She applied herself diligently and turned out high grade work.

Although quiet, Miss Florence was ever pleasant and smiling. As the minister said at the funeral, "If you ever saw her smile you would never forget it."

She leaves her mother, a widow, and a younger brother. The numerous friends of Miss Florence at the Bank assure them of the deepest sympathy in their bereavement.

## THE COLUMNS



**EVELYN L. MEYER**  
*Died July 21, 1919*

**F**OUR years ago Miss Evelyn L. Meyer came to this Bank with her bright, sunshiny disposition. She had worked in a railroad office and felt that there was better opportunity for her in this organization.

The work was entirely new to her and she was a little discouraged at first, but it was not long until she fell into the spirit of the new environment and her diligent work, as well as her willingness, made her successful in the Stenographic Department.

Her friends say that it was always a pleasure to have about them a girl with the disposition of Miss Meyer. She was noted for her punctuality and her faithfulness to duty.

Her mother and father as well as a sister survive her and to them Miss Meyer's friends at the Bank wish to convey their heartfelt sympathy in their great loss.

**E**DWIN A. MUNZNER was one of the active members of the Bank's Fellowship Club. He always participated in the work of this organization and was especially interested in the athletic events at outings. His photograph was taken at one of the outings when he was assisting with the games—a megaphone in one hand ready for action.

He expected to help in a similar way at the annual outing which was planned for the Saturday following the accident and was on one of the committees helping to plan the event.

His work was in the Department of Correspondence and he had many friends throughout the Bank, having been in the organization since January 3rd, 1910. He took a great deal of interest in the local chapter of the American Institute of Banking, contributing to their official publication known as "The Bank Man."

Mr. R. G. Herrick with whom Mr. Munzner worked, says, "He was one of those conscientious workers who stuck to the job early and late, willing to do anything to help out a deserving cause."

Surviving him is Mrs. Munzner, who has in her care three children of a sister who died some time ago and whose husband is in France.

Munzner will be missed greatly by his friends in the Bank.



**EDWIN A. MUNZNER**  
*Died July 21, 1919*



## THE COLVMNS



CARL OTTO  
Died July 21, 1919

THE tick of the telegraph will always remind the people in the Bank of Carl Otto, who faithfully sat day in and day out before the instruments connecting this Bank by private wire with eastern cities. Through his hands went the important messages in connection with the Bank's business.

He had other work. Between messages he did a great deal of translating for the Foreign Department. Carl was a student and was familiar with several languages. Some of the people here pronounced him our "telegraph operator, stenographer, interpreter and all around utility man." He handled anything well which he undertook.

Otto had come back from his vacation one day sooner than he was expected, which was the reason he was in the Bank at the time the unexpected tragedy occurred. His wife and six-year old boy survive him.

He was especially active in the American Institute of Banking, Chicago Chapter, and had many friends in that organization as well as in the Bank. The Bank extends to Mrs. Otto the deepest sympathy.



JAMES E. CARPENTER  
Died July 21, 1919

ON October 3rd, 1918, a boy of quiet manners and of excellent disposition came to work for the Bank. He was an exceptional boy and seemed polite and respectful. He was placed in the lobby to help Mr. Underwood in his contact with patrons at the Information Desk. This boy was James Carpenter.

He showed an admirable spirit in his work and just three weeks ago it was decided that he would be of still more value in the Transit Department. He was transferred to work under Mr. Woodward.

He was the kind of a boy who always found something to do and never was satisfied when idle.

He lived with his mother and father. Companions of James here at the Bank miss him greatly and all with whom he came in contact open up their hearts in sympathy to the mother and father in the great loss of their boy.

## THE COLVMNS



HELEN F. BERGER  
Died July 21, 1919

ONE of the most capable women this Bank has ever known was Helen F. Berger, who came here in November of 1906. She was not only a hard worker and responsible, but fair minded and accommodating. No matter how much work she had in operation she always took time to cooperate in the many special things which would come up unexpectedly at the last moment.

Miss Berger worked in various departments and knew the Bank's detail work thoroughly. The Bank was always uppermost in her mind and she possessed a loyalty to this institution that was admirable.

She possessed a good knowledge of human nature and made a splendid woman to be in charge of the Stenographic Department.

Miss Berger will be missed greatly throughout the Bank.

IT was on December 30th, 1913, when Irene G. Miles first came into the Bank. She worked diligently and steadily as a stenographer and during the six years she was here she made a great many friends.

She was a pleasant woman to have in the organization and her work always has been pronounced highly satisfactory.

Miss Miles looked after her widowed mother. No other children are in the family.

Friends of Miss Miles at the Bank extend their deepest sympathy to Mrs. Miles in her great loss.



IRENE G. MILES  
Died July 21, 1919



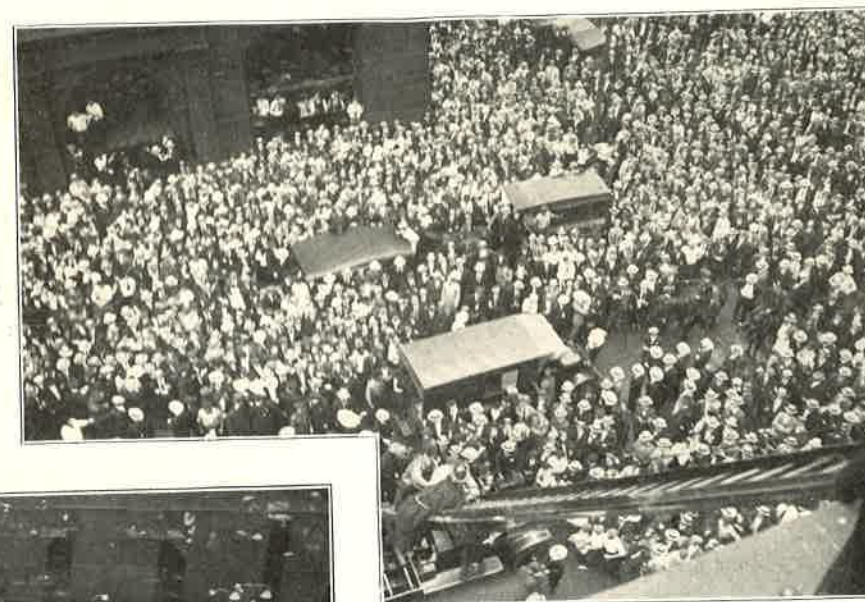


Photographs  
copyrighted  
by International  
Film Company.

**FINAL INSPECTION OF BLIMP**  
Just before starting upon its eventful trip  
mechanicians carefully examined the big ship  
and pronounced it ready for sailing.

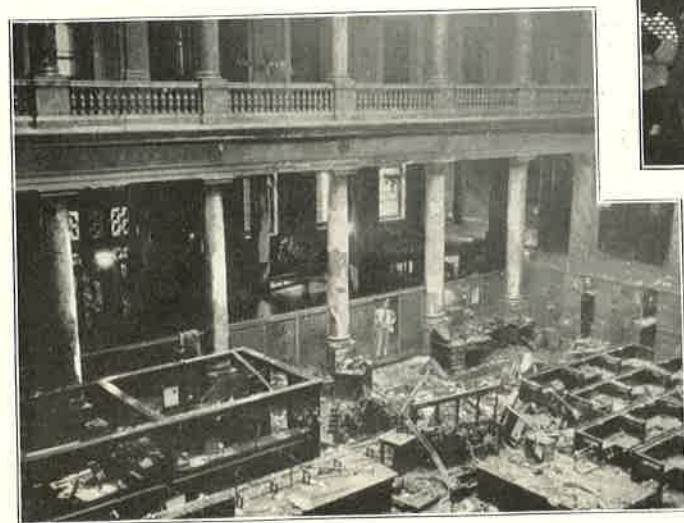


Two rotary engines, gasoline tank and  
mass of twisted iron which came crashing  
through the skylight.



**CROWD OUTSIDE OF BANK**  
Thousands of spectators who witnessed the flight of the  
airship over the loop and its fatal drop, rushed to the  
scene of the disaster, filling the streets on all sides of the  
Bank. Picture shows ambulance below and firemen  
taking body down ladder from roof.

**LOOKING TOWARD OFFICERS QUARTERS**  
The shower of extra thick glass from the skylight followed the crash,  
coming down upon the heads of people in every section of the en-  
closure. The papers scattered over the floor are mostly current  
letters, stationery, etc. The vaults had been closed for a half an  
hour and everything of real value was untouched. (Photograph  
by Hiestand.)



**GENERAL VIEW OF GROUND FLOOR AFTER TRAGEDY**  
This view looks down upon the main floor from the corridor above. In the foreground is the  
cage for Correspondents and General Books. Just beyond it is the spot where the gondola  
and mass of twisted iron came down upon the heads of people. Higher up and farther to  
the right is the recent installation of machine bookkeeping on which many employes were  
at work. At the extreme top are the savings tellers' cages. The narrow escape of some of  
the officers whose quarters were just beyond the entrance to the left is illustrated in this picture.

**START OF DIRIGIBLE FROM GRANT PARK**  
As the silvery dirigible graced the air above Grant Park  
just before its disastrous flight throngs gathered and  
looked upon it with admiration. Its grace, beauty,  
and silent sailing contrasted it from noisy aeroplanes  
which citizens are accustomed to seeing above the city.





## THE COLUMNS



MARY C. GALLAGHER  
Died July 21, 1919

**M**ISS MARY C. GALLAGHER came with the Bank September 18th, 1918. She was in the Stenographic Department and had a splendid record for satisfactory work during that time. Those who came in contact with her work always spoke highly of her efforts.

Originally she started with the Bank in the Savings Department and was transferred to the Stenographic Department about two months previous to the disaster.

Miss Gallagher was very pleasant and her desire to render satisfactory service made her a commendable woman to have in the Department.

Her mother and father survive her.

In this time of sorrow her friends at the Bank want to extend to them their sincere sympathy.

**T**HREE weeks was the short length of time in which Joseph Scanlan had been employed in the Bank.

He was the boy who took James Carpenter's place at the Information Desk when the latter boy was transferred to another Department.

In the short time he was in the Bank he made a very good impression. He seemed to be the sort of a boy who had a desire to give the kind of service that would bring appreciation from those about him. He was diligent in his work and kept busy continually.

To his family the Bank extends the kindest sympathy in this time of great sorrow.



JOSEPH SCANLAN  
Died July 21, 1919

## THE COLUMNS

### Bank Seeks to Help Injured



MARCUS C. CALLOPY  
Died July 23, 1919

**T**HE terrific onslaught of fiery death left many employees severely injured. The thoughts of everybody turned to the injured immediately following the disaster. All were given medical aid and those who were badly injured were rushed to hospitals. One of President Mitchell's first moves was to appoint a representative to look into every case of injury personally and promptly report to him. Everything that would in any way relieve the suffering was ordered done.

The list of injured totals twenty-seven. Some were burned, some were hit by flying glass from the skylight and others were caught in the shower of debris brought down by the blimp.

Among the employees, open heartedness and helpful spirit sprung up the instant they discovered their fellow workers were victims of the tragedy. Awed by the spectacle, each individual began to assist their comrades. Many who were badly injured jumped in to lend all the aid they could and others who were dazed by the tremendous surprise, instinctively rushed to the assistance of those who were less fortunate.

Few of our people had any conception of what had happened other than that a tremendous quantity of flaming debris had descended through the skylight upon the heads of their companions. Their quick action in lending assistance under the circumstances is, therefore, commendable.

Photographs of some of the injured appear on the next page

**E**VERYONE knew him as "Mark" Callopy and that is the name by which he long will be remembered.

Mark was a teller and a splendid worker too. He was in the Foreign Department, having been transferred to that position after a long experience in the Savings Department. He came with the Bank September 1st, 1911.

Most members of the Bank knew Mark and he was pronounced a mighty capable man. He was quiet and unassuming in manner as well as faithful and diligent in his work.

It is said that he had left his cage and gone to the Stenographic Department to add a postscript to a letter when the blimp came crashing through the skylight bringing death to those about him and the injuries which caused Mark's death a few days later.

He leaves a wife and three small children. May they feel the great sympathy which goes out to them from the hearts of Mark's many friends in the Bank.



## THE COLVMNS



SOME OF THE INJURED

1. Arthur J. Amundson, hands and face burned. 2. Elsie L. Boyd, back cut and arm wounded. 3. Mabel Watt, cuts on hand, ankle and lip. 4. David Hunt, slightly injured. 5. Alice J. Morrison, back burned, ankle sprained. 6. Elizabeth Long, head wounded, arm burned, ankle sprained. 7. George C. Cory, badly burned. 8. Myrtle C. Meyer, severely burned. 9. Maitland G. Williams, scalp wounds and toes crushed. 10. William Woodward, slightly injured. 11. J. Robert Harris, slightly injured. 12. Charles E. Smithman, head seriously burned. 13. Dorothy Edwards, shoulder and arm cut. 14. Charles G. Toskey, slightly injured. 15. Edward Hardyman, back, head and shoulder cut, ear burned. 16. Catherine Bruch, scalp wound and left hand lacerated. 17. Edward E. Nelson, slightly injured. 18. Mabelle Ryan, cuts and burns. 19. Dorothy O'Malley, back burned and arm cut. 20. Glenn W. McCament, cuts on hand and head. 21. Helen Durland, back severely burned. 22. Frank E. Schall, cut on knee. Josephine Macbeth, hands and face burned. Lillian Petznick, burns. Marie Hosfield, cuts. Harry McCullough and Hazel C. Hargis.

## THE COLVMNS



The top picture shows book-keeping section as it looked just before the tragedy. The lower picture shows the same section after the crash had come, bringing death and destruction.

### The Story As Told by the Bank's Own People

OFFICERS and employees have been left grief stricken by a catastrophe weird and horrible. It came with such a suddenness that practically all persons fortunate enough to escape with their lives were dazed by the shock, particularly those who were injured.

Adding to the horror of it all was the fact that none of the Bank people knew what had happened. Outside, thousands had watched the dirgible sail over the loop, catch fire and come rushing in flames toward the skylight of this Bank. But those who were inside hastening to finish the day's business had no warning of the coming catastrophe nor did they know what had happened until firemen brought news from the outside.

There was a rush for the outside walls,

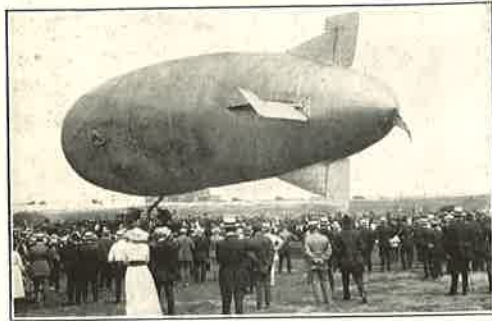
away from the spot where the flaming debris dropped. The men hurried girls out the windows. Many of the girls were injured. Blackman was one of the men in the Savings Department to help people through the window. His clothes had much blood on them and when asked afterward if he was injured he replied, "No, and I don't know where I got the blood on my clothes except that it must have been that some of those I helped through the window were injured."

One of the policemen in the front corridor who was close enough to see what a terrible catastrophe it was, stopped for an instant not knowing what he could do. The heat from the blazing gasoline was intense. As he looked, one of the girls with her clothing



## THE COLVMNS

ablaze, rushed out into the corridor. He immediately took off his coat and tried to beat out the flames. He was not successful until Assistant Cashier Mills, another policeman, and several



Beautiful dirigible in Grant Park just prior to its death trip.

more individuals came to his assistance.

Miss Messinger, the telephone operator who has been with the Bank many years is located in the center of the corridor upstairs, having an unobstructed

view of almost every corner of the Bank. She says, "Sitting here at the exchange I thought there appeared a big shadow over the skylight, when suddenly there was a crash and before I could look up it seemed as if the entire roof had fallen through to the floor below. The heat and impact of the crash was terrible. There was no time to hesitate and look over the rail. My only thought was to get away from it all."

Charles Hiestand, savings teller, said, "I had just stopped at Miss Berger's desk where Mark Callopy was standing and as Miss Berger was busy I passed on toward the Bond Department. If the accident had occurred one minute sooner I would have been in the very spot where the heaviest mechanism fell."

Publicity Manager Conner was in his office on the Balcony Floor when the blimp came down. He says the heat

(Continued on next page)

### Message from Bank's Cashier

JUST a short distance from the grating to the east of my desk were stationed most of the twenty-seven employees injured and all of the ten employees who lost their lives in the awful calamity which occurred a little before five o'clock in the afternoon of July twenty-first.

My duties necessitated being among these employees several times each business day and practically all of the officials whose desks are in front depended largely upon those now gone for their stenographic and statistical work; and as some of them started their business careers with us we feel that sorrow and deep personal loss as though members of our own families were gone.

My sympathy in its fullest goes out to the relatives of those who lost their lives and also to all who were injured.

J. I. COOPER, Cashier.



J. I. COOPER,  
Cashier

## THE COLVMNS



Photograph taken immediately after fall of the dirigible, while rescue work was going on. Fire still in progress.

was terrific even up on the balcony and he could readily understand why the rescue work was so difficult.

The injured were cared for by fellow workers and everywhere a helpful spirit was shown. Many of the boys who were struck by flying glass and otherwise injured forgot their own wounds and helped in the rescue work. The desire to be of assistance spread until everyone was busy lending a hand.

The same bravery that characterized some of the Bank's employees on the

battlefield was evidenced by all having the opportunity to aid in the rescue work. It was the same courage and same spirit of helpfulness.

This splendid feeling has been a permanent one. The faithful people have been working day and night to fill the places of the injured until they are able to get back and to take care of the work of those who never will return. It has been a sad and difficult task. But the Bank's people have set their lips and met it in a loyal and commendable manner.

There is just one outstanding element of consolation in the whole tragedy—that this terrible event will have a strong influence on progress so as to prevent any future loss of life under similar circumstances. Therefore, it is the expectation that these people have not died in vain and that all the suffering and sorrow will mean much for the common good.



J. A. Boettner,  
pilot of the dirigible.



## THE COLUMNS

### GENERAL NOTES

The Illinois Trust & Savings Bank wishes to thank the Buffalo Times for going out of its way to secure details for one of our people in connection with the great tragedy.

\* \* \* \* \*

This calamity has exhibited great loyalty and the pressure brings out willingness and ability—F. E. Schall.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mrs. John J. Mitchell in her widely known, Good Samaritan spirit, personally sent beautiful bouquets to each of the injured.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Equitable Life Assurance Company, in which the Bank carries policies, telegraphed on receipt of the news of the accident explaining that they would gladly forward checks without the need of customary papers, remitting in full before definite details were furnished. A reply giving the names was sent immediately and the checks were forthcoming on the Twentieth Century the following day.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Fellowship Club sent flowers to every home where death had visited. The injured received flowers, candy and cigars—as was preferred in individual cases.

\* \* \* \* \*

All funerals were attended by representative officers and employes.

\* \* \* \* \*

Truly this is an institution with a soul.

### How Fellow Employes Feel About Loss of Companions

—By an Employe

WE have a feeling of home about our Bank. When anything happens to one of us we are all concerned. We want to know about it, to help if we can, to express our sympathy. And this utterly unexpected catastrophe simply intensified our loyalty and hope for one another.

It is reassuring and comforting to find how the Bank stands back of us, giving us opportunity to use our best powers, and caring for us in weakness and distress. Yet the very fact that even our fortress-like building was not secure against this blow, that our great organization could not save some of us from death, some from serious injury, brings us to the recognition of something in ourselves, a strength and stability, a sense of the greater life for which this is but a preparation.

We miss our companions and friends. We see some physical scars upon those who come back. But, if we take this lesson to heart, that we are here for a purpose, will not the happening mean definite bracing and bettering of life for us all?

We may not be able to reason out just why this disorderly event was permitted in our little hive, or why one was taken and another left. The idea of fate may seem dark and threatening to us but, be sure that "the flame of a sword turning every way to keep the way of the tree of life" means that the terror is not without an eternal significance in pointing upward to the house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.

LOUIS RICH

"We feel upon our fevered brow  
Their gentle touch, their breath of balm;  
Their arms enfold us, and our hearts  
Grow comforted and calm.

"And ever near us, though unseen,  
The dear immortal spirits tread;  
For all the boundless universe  
Is life—there are no dead."





SEP 3 1941