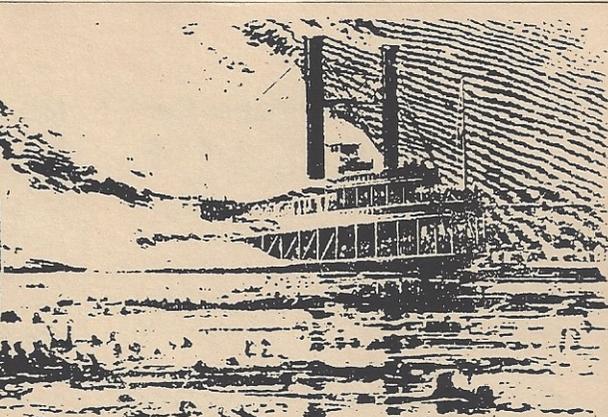


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SULTANA REMEMBERED



Newsletter of the Association of Sultana Descendants and Friends

April 27, 1865

SUMMER 1998

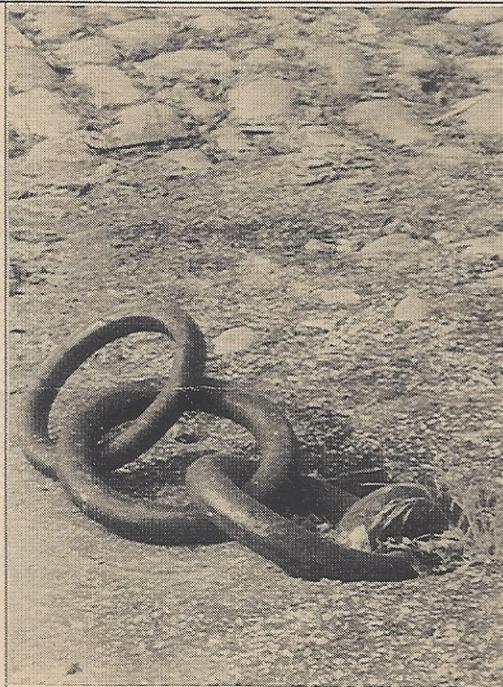
Memphis Remembers the *Sultana*

- By Pam Newhouse

This past Memorial Day I was honored to speak at the Sultana Memorial Ceremony held in downtown Memphis, Tennessee, in a park beside the Mississippi River. This annual remembrance is organized by the Sons of Union Veterans, Memphis Camp #1 and the Daughters of Union Veterans, Hetty M. McEwen Tent #1. Their commemoration of this Union disaster is even more special because this is CSA General Nathan Bedford Forest country (the general and his wife are buried downtown), and Memphis still celebrates its Confederate ties during the Civil War. (Shortly after the Sultana ceremony a Confederate one was held in another part of town.)

Two men, Clyde J. Getman, Commander of the Memphis Camp, and Robert Neyman, Senior Vice Commander, were responsible for organizing this ceremony. Prayers were said, songs were sung, and a wreath was laid by Charles C. Yates, Past Memphis Camp Commander and Marlene Wilkinson, Past President of the Hetty McEwen Tent, at the base of the Sultana state historical marker that Jerry Potter worked so hard to get erected some years ago. Also, a group of reenactors participated by firing salutes over the Mississippi River in honor of the Sultana soldiers who left from this exact spot on April 26, 1865 with so many high hopes of finally arriving home. The units were: 53rd IN Inf., Co. I, 1st Lt. Robert Wetzell; 5th US Artillery (Terrill's Battery) Co. H, Capt. Nat Kimes; and 7th TN Cav., US, Co C., Capt Brian Snavelly.

I conveyed my heartfelt thanks to all who participated on behalf of all Sultana



Rings to tie up the boats on the historic cobblestone wharf in Memphis remain a silent witness of days gone by.

**"That Old Man River,
that Old Man River,
he must know
somethin', but don't
say nothin', He just
keeps rollin', he
keeps on rollin'
along."**

-Old Man River, by Jerome Kern

passenger descendants.

After the service I looked over at the remaining section of the old cobblestone Memphis wharf area and saw the *Delta Queen* steamboat there. The *Delta Queen* is one of only three large steam driven paddlewheelers operating in this country today.

Built in 1927, this boat has been designated a National Historic structure, and is the closest thing to the Sultana's descendant that there is. Indeed, there are some similarities between the two vessels. Both were/are powered by steam, the Sultana's four boilers being fueled by coal, the *Delta Queen*, by oil. Both boats had/have four decks. The *Delta Queen*, however, is propelled by a single rear paddlewheeler, 19' wide, 28' in diameter, while the Sultana was a sidewheeler whose two waterwheels measured 34' in diameter and carried 11' long bucket planks.

The *Delta Queen* is 285' long, 60' wide, and weighs 3,360 tons. The Sultana was 260' long, 39' wide, and weighed about 579 tons. The *Delta Queen* has 87 staterooms and carries 174 passengers and 75 crew. The Sultana could carry only 76 cabin passengers, but 300 more could sit or stand on her open main deck. She also could, and did, carry 660 tons of freight on her main deck.

(Three months after I saw the *Delta Queen* in Memphis my husband Larry and I went on a Civil War themed cruise on this boat. Lovely! I couldn't help comparing our uncrowded and pampered circumstances to that of the Sultana's 2,400+ passengers.)

While I was in Memphis I visited the sites of the hospitals where Sultana victims were taken after the disaster. Approximately 187 persons were brought to these places; many would die later.

By the spring of 1863 thirteen Memphis buildings contained Union hospital facilities, and we know that *Sultana* survivors were taken to five of these: Overton, on the east side of Main St. at Popular Ave.; Adams, on the west side of Second St. between Jefferson and Adams; Washington, on the east side of Main St., between Union and Gayoso; Gayoso, on the east side of Main St., between Gayoso and McCall (now Peabody Place). None of these original buildings remain, but the 5th place, the Soldiers Home, where victims were taken who were not severely injured, still exists. In fact, it is now known as the Hunt-Phelen Home, located at 533 Beale St., near Lauderdale. I would certainly recommend to everyone visiting Memphis that you take a tour of this beautifully preserved place. Built from 1828-1832 in an area where wealthy and famous Memphis residents lived, some of the mansion's early guests included President Andrew Jackson, Jefferson Davis, and Nathan Bedford Forrest. The home was also Gen. Grant's headquarters when he planned the Siege/Battle of Vicksburg. After Grant's departure it became a hospital and hospitality lodge for Union soldiers, and therefore witnessed the sad tragedy of the *Sultana*. Beautifully restored, with elegant gardens, a guided tour here is a must. Our guide, staff member Don Pritchard, was familiar with the home's connection to the *Sultana* and is very interested in it. If you visit the Hunt-Phelan Home, tell Don that you are a descendant or have a special interest in the *Sultana*.

Before leaving Memphis I visited historic Elmwood Cemetery, where a monument honoring *Sultana* victims was placed in 1989. Only 197 bodies were recovered from the river in this area, many of which were never identified. Those persons whose bodies weren't shipped home to their families were originally interred here at Elmwood. Soldier victims were then reburied at the newly established Memphis National Cemetery in 1867.

Three identified civilian victims are at Elmwood: Esther Spikes, 42, her daughter Susan Spikes, 17, and crew member George Slater. The cemetery is located at 824 S. Dudley St., and is open from 8 AM to 4 PM daily. (The National Cemetery is at 3568 Townes Ave., and is open daily from 8AM to dark.

Next, I crossed over the powerful "Old

Man River", heading for Arkansas and the final resting place of the *Sultana*. My friends Kay and Rocky Brockwell from Marion, Arkansas, were my able guides. Our mission was twofold: To go to the general area where the *Sultana's* remains rests, and to meet with descendants of those who rescued *Sultana* survivors in the early dark hours of April 27, 1865. Thanks to the Brockwells, both missions were accomplished. The idea of meeting the descendants of these heroic people was thrilling to me.



Your newsletter editor, Pam Newhouse, standing in front of the Delta Queen

The *Sultana* exploded about seven miles above Memphis, just above the small settlement of Mound City, Arkansas. J. G. Berry, a discharged Confederate soldier, along with his friend, George Malone, helped pull about a hundred people from the river. His young son, L. P. Berry and L. P.'s cousin, Alison Berry Rieves, who was visiting the Berrys, helped by building a fire to warm and dry the unfortunates as they were brought out of the river. L. P. Berry later related: "I could hear the screams, prayers and cries of a thousand men all at once, more than a hundred of whom were drowned in plain view of my mother and me...our cook brought a big boiler of coffee and everyone did what he could to relieve the suffering (of those who were still alive). Many of those rescued

were Germans and could not speak English....A great number were rescued by Mr. Fogelman and his boys."

We visited Mary Beth Reves, widow of a descendant of the Rieves boy. Mary Beth said that her husband often said that his ancestor related that he could "never forget the horror on the faces of the men in the water."

We next went to Frank A. Fogelman's house, great great grandson of the John Fogelman mentioned by L. P. Berry. John's home was located at what was then known as "Fogelman's Landing" (near Mound City) where boats often stopped. John, with his sons Dallas and Leroy, worked tirelessly all night, rescuing people on a makeshift raft of logs. Many owed their lives to the Fogelmans.

Frank A. Fogelman is Mayor of the town of Marion, which is the nearest settlement to the now non-existent town of Mound City. The death knell of the *Sultana* was also the death knell of the Mound City: a sand bar gradually formed around the partially sunken hull of the boat, which later increased to the size of a large island, cutting off Mound City from the river. Thus removed, the need for a town decreased and its population moved away.

Frank took the Brockwells and me out to the approximate area to where the remains of the *Sultana* drifted. He doesn't own the land in which it rests, but he owns much of the property nearby. It is here that he and the citizens of Marion are planning to host "Sultana 2000" - a event to be held in April of 2000 commemorating the disaster. This will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get close to the site of the *Sultana's* remains. (I will be working with them on this; I encourage all descendants and friends to plan on attending. In fact, the success of this event depends on your participation! Mark the end of the month of April, 2000. Actual date TBA.)

Over the years many people have searched for the exact final resting place of the *Sultana*. I recently received some correspondence from one such gentleman, Robert Harrell, of Gadsden, Alabama, who found evidence of the boat in the 1950s. The following is, in part, what he said:

"I had a free hand to go to the property anytime and took advantage of this (offer by the property owner, Mr.

Dacus) in 1955-56. Let it be known for all the hours spent in the woods, a view of the actual wreck was never seen as it is under possibly twenty-five to thirty feet of soil...and no effort was made to confirm by deep digging... I understand that the last time the wreck could be viewed was in 1889. I did place a 1/2" metal pipe deep into the ground over our determined location- and I see no reason this pipe would have ever been removed. This was in July 1956...at the time the area was all woods with heavy growth, and to our great advantage it was just the same and river overflow had deposited the soil. About 1970 (new property owner) Sam Oliver cleared close to a thousand acres to cultivate soybeans, and the original contours were practically all destroyed... Sam is not at fault as he then had no idea what a tremendously valuable historical location his equipment was altering...he later showed great interest in the *Sultana* location, this in early 1982. However, I did not work with him on this

as Jerry Potter and Sam Oliver were going full speed ahead and I had long dropped out of the earlier project. Then later, title to the property changed from Oliver to new owners... this is not public land, it's private property."

This is beautiful, expansive land. Pecan groves dots the countryside, and cotton and soybeans are the major crops grown here. The river is a part of much that has happened here since the Spaniards first arrived in this area in 1541.

So there I stood on the levee with Frank Fogelman, looking over towards "the Mighty Mississippi" and *Sultana's* final resting place. A *Sultana* soldier descendant standing next to a *Sultana* rescuer descendant. I felt a strong connection to the past there, and to the disaster that forever changed the lives of so many families. At first, it was a melancholy feeling; but then, my spirit soared as I considered how life regenerates and heals old wounds as newer generations become a bridge to the future. ■

Captured by Rebels: Memoirs of a *Sultana* Survivor

The following is an excerpt from an article in the Plainville Times, Plainville, Kansas, on May 28, 1908 by J. R. Collins, Co. F, 3rd TN Cavalry. It was contributed by his great great grandson, Gene Shields, of Hurst, Texas.

"It was during the summer of 1864 that the Third Tennessee Cavalry, to which the writer belonged, was encamped near Nashville, Tenn., along with the Fourth Tennessee Cavalry. Sometime about the middle of June of that year the two regiments received orders to proceed south and we at once broke camp and took up the march southward, traveling down through middle Tennessee and on into Alabama.

The first stop of any duration was a Mooresville, Ala., a small town in the northern part of the state, a few mile south of Decatur. The stop at Mooresville was of two or three weeks in duration and we then moved on to Decatur, where we again went into camp.

At the time of which I write, the country surrounding Decatur and, in fact, the entire region of the state, was infested with prowling bands of guerillas and deserters from the army and after arriving at Decatur, we were detailed on scouting duty against these miscreants as well as against the regular enemy.

Our stay in Decatur was only a few weeks in duration, when we again broke camp and proceeded to Huntsville, Alabama, and from there on to Athens, Ala., at which place we again went into camp and resumed our scouting operations through the surrounding country.

About the 23rd of September, 1864, while on one of these scouting expeditions, our force, consisting of about 15 men came in contact with the command of Nathan B. Forrest, between Athens and Florence, Ala. Forrest was then on the march toward Athens with a heavy force, and as our force only consisted of a scouting party, we made a detour, evading the Confederates and continued our expedition. On our return trip a day or two afterward, when we arrived at Sulphur Trestle, some six mile out of



Frank A. Fogelman, Mayor of Marion, Arkansas, and descendant of John Fogelman, rescuer of many *Sultana* victims.

REMINDER

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Athens, we learned that General Forrest had attacked the place with his force, and captured all the troops stationed there.

At Sulphur Trestle there was a small force and one piece of artillery; and after some delay and consultation among our officers, we took possession of this little force and prepared to defend ourselves against an attack. This attack was not long in coming. Early the following morning Forrest's troops appeared on the scene and an engagement between our little force stationed in the fortifications and could only have been one result of such a one-sided affair, and after a hot fight, lasting five hours, we were compelled to surrender. This was on Sunday morning, September 25, 1864.

Our captors immediately started with us, under strong guard, southward. After traveling three days we came to a railroad, the name of which I do not now remember. Here we found two trains of freight cars waiting to carry us to the Confederate prison at Cahaba, Ala. We now started on one of the saddest and most gloomy rides many of us had ever undertaken. To make matters worse, the front train was wrecked by being derailed.

We were on this train about two days, passing through Corinth and Meridian, Miss. Arriving at Cahaba river in Ala, we left the cars and embarked on a steamboat, there awaiting to carry us to the Confederate prison at Cahaba, Ala. The voyage down the river was soon complete, and in a few hours we arrived at our destination on the banks of the river. This prison had been an old cotton warehouse in former days, and within its dark and gloomy walls we took up our abode, not having the least idea of when we could get out of there.

The horrors of the battlefield and of war in general were tame in comparison to what soldiers had to endure in these fearful prison houses. Starvation and disease were the enemies to be encountered there and were two fold more deadly than musket balls.

I shall not endeavor to give a detailed description of the routine and monotony of our prison life. Suffice it to say that we suffered untold horrors there. In addition to want of food, the proximity of the prison to the river allowed the water, when the river became swollen from the frequent rains, to rise up into the building and cover the floor to a depth of from one to three and four feet deep. Our building was not far from some cordwood which

our captors furnished us, and on these pens we were able to keep out of water when the place was flooded. For six long weary months we lived in this dreadful existence, and ached every day for a breath of pure air and a sight of the glorious blue sky once more.

Finally to our intense joy and relief, word came that we were to be sent to the exchange camp at Vicksburg, Miss., to be exchanged. Words cannot begin to express our feelings when we knew that we were to leave that horrible hole. Hearts full of gratitude and thanksgiving to the great Almighty beat riotously in the bosom of every prisoner and the tears coursed unrestrained down every cheek when the glad news was made known."

We Need Your Help!

Virgil Davis is our Annual Reunion videographer. This year he had some technical problems and wasn't able to video the complete event. He noticed that there was at least one other person taping that day and he would like whomever that person is to get in touch with him so that he can compile a more complete record of our Knoxville 1998 gathering. Thanks!

Contact Virgil at:

2005 Cochran Pl.
Maryville, TN 37803
Phone: (432)981-2927



Some of the reenactors that participated in the Sultana Memorial Day Ceremony in Memphis, TN, May 25, 1998.

NEW SUBSCRIBERS

- JoAnn Hawkins, P. O. Box 26832, Las Vegas, NV 89126-0832
- Lynn Davis, 27139 Bowman Rd., Defiance OH 43512 (Desc. of John Davis, survivor.)
- Carolyn Carter, 369 Huntington Dr., Wayne, PA 19087
- Linda Derry, 719 Tremont, Selma AL 36701 (Mgr., Historic Cahaba)
- Jerry Elick, 503 Fort, Bremen, OH 43107
- Clyde Babb, 16679 State Hwy, AF, Dexter, MO 63841-9409 (Desc. of Adam Farmer, 3rd TN Cav.)
- Mrs. Glenn H. Lee, 7608 W. 52nd St., Shawnee Mission, KS 66202-1118 (Husband: Desc. of Wesley Lee, Co. A. 102nd OH Inf.)
- B.L. Newtown, 3504 Morrish Rd., Swartz Creek, MI 48473
- Charles Dawkins, 13 Melrose Cir., Hattiesburg, MS 39402
- Charles Badgett, P.O. Box 1983, Fairfield Glade, TN 38558 (Desc. of Samuel H. Badgett, Co. L., 3rd TN Cav.)
- Cowan E. Jones, 55 Founders Road, Glastonbury, CT 06033
- Kurt Guelde, 5278 E. Maple, Grand Blanc, MI 48439
- Carole A. Demongeot, 75 N. Rocky River Dr., Berea, OH 44017
- Richard E. Troup, 235 Poplar Dr., McConnelsville, OH 43756-1042 (Desc. of Manuel Harnly, Co. D, 102nd OH Inf.)
- Cindy Reed, 141 Woodberry Dr., Athens, GA 30605 (Desc. of Henry Marshall, Co. F, 3rd TN Cav.)
- Gene Rearick, 3690 N. 2710 E., Twin Falls, ID 83301
- Robert Cody, 238 E. Lincoln Ave., Columbus, OH 43214 (Desc. of Daniel Garber, 102nd OH Inf.)
- Judy Warren, 2992 W. Whittier Ct., Ann Arbor, MI 48104 (Desc. of Orlando Cole, 18th MI Inf.)

1998 Sultana Reunion Report

What a great turnout we had this year with about 140 people in attendance! This number rivals the huge crowd we had in 1996 when Gene Salecker's new bok, Disaster on the Mississippi, came out. Even though most of those who came to the reunion are from Knoxville and the surrounding area, a good many traveled from other state such as Alabama, Kentucky, Texas, Georgia, Florida, Michigan Oklahoma, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and Nevada! I was amazed to meet one couple who came from Germany to be with us! I feel certain that the Internet has been instrumental in spreading the new of our group to those who live outside Tennessee's borders.

The reunion started at noon at the *Sultana* monument that stands in the cemetery behind Mt. Olive Baptist Church at 2500 Maryville Pike in South Knoxville. Despite the drizzling rain, we were able to recognize and celebrate the addition of three names to the monument that were initially omitted. Over the last few years we have now added seven names that were unintentionally left off the monument. I know there are other names that need to be added, so contact me is you feel your ancestor's name is not listed. Thanks to Ken Creswell, Joe Mode, Brian Snavely and others who served as an honor guard and fired a salute to the *Sultana* men.

Similar to years past, we reconvened in the church and conducted a ceremony to remember the *Sultana* ancestors. This was followed by several short talks related to the *Sultana* story. Special thanks goes to Eleanor Guess and Los Haddox Bell who shared with us the memories of their grandfathers who they know as little girls (Plez Keeble and John Simpson, respectively).

We always enjoy hearing from the son or daughter of a *Sultana* soldier. Glenna Green related the story of her father, Samuel W. Jenkins. Joining us again from his home in Texas, Robert Warner followed by describing the events surrounding his father, William Warner. (I also want to recognize Elsie Huffaker would could not be with us. Her father

was Jesse Huffaker.)

Thanks goes to the Appalachian Harmonizers for their Civil War songs, especially a favorite of the *Sultana* old-timers that we had not sung before, "Will There Be Any Stars?"

A word of appreciation also goes to all those who assisted in the finger foods and drinks, set up and cleanup, displays and other contributions I don't know about. Also, the money to cover expenses was generously donated, I have itemized these following this report.

It's never too early to start planning for next year. Bring friends and relatives with you as we gather again in Knoxville in 1999 for another great event.

-NORMAN C. SHAW, *Founder, Association of Sultana Descendants and Friends*

" I hear America(ns) singing, the varied carols I hear..... Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else, The day what belongs to the day--at night the party of young fellows, robust, friendly, Singing with open mouths their strong, melodious songs."

-Walt Whitman, American poet and Civil War nurse

Financial Accounting- 1998 Sultana Meeting

Due to the generous contributions of the participants at our April, 1998 meeting, \$376 was collected to offset expenses. The distribution of the funs is as follows:

- Paper goods and drinks\$104.89
- Add name to monument61.67
- Offering to Mt. Olive Baptist Church 100.00
- Offset monthly Internet fee for Sultana home page*109.44

* The monthly charge to maintain our home page is \$25./mo. Last year, when we decided to have a presence on the net, Jerry Potter and Gene Salecker generously donated enough funds to pay for a year, through April 1998. The money from the reunion paid the bill through July. We have no present plan in place to pay this expense- we are not a dues- paying organization nor do we want to be one. Because being on the net is such a worthwhile thing, I will continue to pay this monthly fee, depending on those of you can help by sending me a donation or a little extra with your newsletter renewal check. I will keep track of what I receive, and when I have enough to pay through April 1998 (\$225), I will let you know!

-PAM NEWHOUSE, Editor



The Hunt-Phelen Home in Mempis. In 1865 it was the Soldiers Home, and Sultana survivors were brought here.