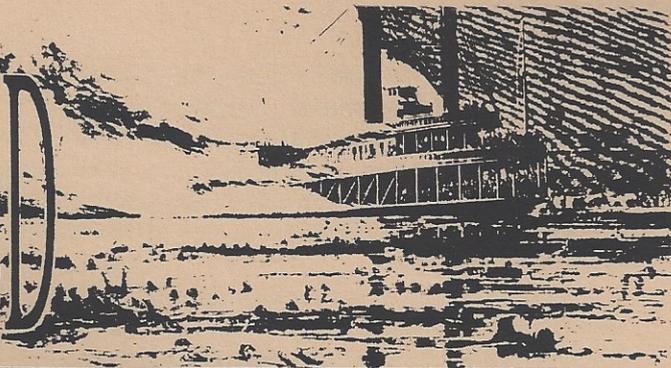


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SULTANA REMEMBERED



Newsletter of the Association of Sultana Descendants and Friends

April 27, 1865

FALL 1994

"Did We Win?"

CIVIL WAR BATTLEFIELDS

- BY PAM NEWHOUSE

(Last summer I was privileged to work for the National Park Service [NPS] at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park in Fredericksburg, Virginia. My main job was to guide visitors around the Chancellorsville Battlefield, answer questions and do on-the-spot research at the Visitors Center, and tell the story of Confederate General "Stonewall" Jackson's death at the Jackson Shrine. It was an awesome experience. -Pam)

The soldiers who found themselves on the *Sultana* on April 27, 1865 were undoubtedly feeling that their trials would soon be over because they were going home. They had survived the rigors of prisons like Andersonville and Cahaba, and, before that, the dangers of the battlefield. Minutes before the explosion some reflected on how lucky they were to be on board. Many of their comrades had fallen in battles such as Franklin and Gettysburg. They may have been talking about the engagements they had been in and the friends they had left behind in shallow graves.

Soldiers like these who survived the *Sultana* disaster began making pilgrimages back to battle sites almost as soon as the war ended. They went to relive the frantic and terrifying moments they spent there, to mourn their friends who didn't survive, and to marvel at the fact that they did. By the 1870's veterans were returning to battlefield sites in droves. And often they'd ask local residents to guide them to a specific spot.

Sometimes veterans from far away states would end up staying in an area permanently so they could guide others on a battlefield where they fought. One such soldier was Pvt. John F. Chase, 5th Maine Artillery.

Pvt. Chase was desperately wounded by shrapnel at Gettysburg when a confederate shell exploded in front of him. Taken for dead, he was laid in a wagon and was being driven away for burial when a sudden bump jolted him back to consciousness. The wagon driver was shocked, to say the least, when his "dead" cargo suddenly sat up and said, "Did we win?" The driver hurriedly took Chase to a surgeon instead of a grave and he survived to become one of the first battlefield guides here.

Gettysburg became one of the first National Military Parks in 1895, with others to follow. In 1933 the National Park Service was formed as part of the Department of the Interior, and the administration of the battlefields passed into its control.

**"..but spirits linger
to consecrate
the visionplace
of souls".**

- JOSHUA LAWRENCE CHAMBERLAIN,
GETTYSBURG, OCTOBER 3, 1889

Today, the NPS administers approximately 22 Civil War battlefields, while others are state or privately owned. Gettysburg National Military Park alone has approximately 6,000 acres of land, 35 miles of roads and 30 historic farms. This is the most heavily visited Civil War battlefield in the country, with two million people coming annually from all over the world.

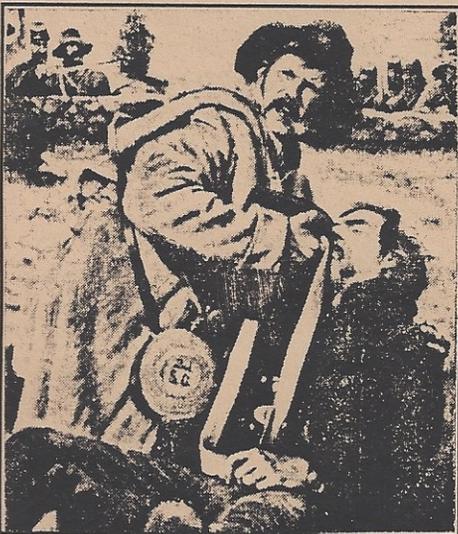
While Gettysburg NMP preserves and commemorates a single battle, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park encompasses four major battles and one memorial site. The four battles are: Fredericksburg (Dec. 1862), Chancellorsville (May 1863 - and the Battle of Salem Church was part of this campaign), The Wilderness (May 1864), and Spotsylvania Courthouse (May 1864). The town of Fredericksburg itself is full of history, and was an important settlement even in American colonial times.

The town and the NPS do an excellent job of interpreting the history of the area. I know firsthand how well trained Park Service ranger/historians are and how professionally they do their job. Committed to telling the story of what happened here and dedicated to preserving the Park and its artifacts, the staff is a credit to the country.

People come here from all over the world. I talked to Germans, Australians and Irish as well as Americans of all ages who were drawn to this place to see where Confederate Generals Lee and Jackson conferred before their stunning victory at Chancellorsville; where men desperately fought hand-to-hand for twenty continuous hours at the "Bloody Angle" at the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House. They also visit the still-dense forest of the Wilderness - where the battle raged in such thick underbrush that it was difficult for the

soldiers to see who they were shooting at. (And then the tinder-dry material caught fire from the gunpowder flash of the guns and burned alive hundreds of wounded who couldn't get out, making the The Wilderness one of the veterans' most horrific war memories.)

Visitors also come to see the so-called "sunken road" in Fredericksburg which still exists behind the stone wall where, on December 13, 1862, Confederates stood and decimated regiments of the Union army as they were ordered forward in a futile attempt to breach the wall. Here also people hear the story (my personal favorite) of Sgt. Richard Kirkland as told by NPS historian guides: Kirkland, a Confederate soldier from South Carolina, became so distressed at the number of suffering Union wounded lying in front of the wall in the bitterly cold winter night after the attack that after receiving reluctant permission from his commanding officer, he climbed over the wall and gave water to the men piteously crying out for it. Carrying his comrade's canteens, he spent hours going from one to the other of the wounded enemy, and making countless trips to a nearby well. Armed Union soldiers watching from the other side witnessed his bravery and kindness to their troops and held their fire. He was thenceforth known by those Northerners on the field that day as "The Angel of Marye's Heights" (the name of the hill to the rear of the sunken road). Kirkland was killed the following year at the Battle of Chickamauga. He was 20 years old.



John McNott's representation of Richard Kirkland at Fredericksburg: "The Angel of Marye's Heights".

Visitors had many questions to ask. James W. Wensyel, licensed battlefield guide at Gettysburg recently shared some of *his*

favorites in his book, Tales of a Battlefield Guide: "Did the Americans win the battle?" (Gettysburg). His answer: "Yes, ma'am, unfortunately they also lost it." And, "Why were all these battles fought on National Parks?" And, "Where do you store all these monuments in the winter?" (Gettysburg has over 1300 battlefield monuments commemorating individuals, states, regiments, brigades, etc.)

My favorite place of all the significant sites at Fredericksburg/ Spotsylvania NMP is the Jackson Shrine where General Thomas Jonathan "Stonewall" Jackson died after being wounded seven days earlier at the Battle of Chancellorsville. The Shrine consists of a small white clapboard structure which served as the office for the Chandler plantation, which no longer stands. It is located 27 miles down the road from Fredericksburg in a still-isolated rural area known as Guinea Station. Trains still pass nearby just as they did 131 years ago. Driving there to go to work early on a still, hazy summer morning was like driving into the past and was the highlight of my work week. One could almost picture the General being taken there after the battle. The building is furnished much as it was on May 10, 1863 when Jackson, sensing this world slipping away and the hereafter approaching murmured, "Let us cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees." He died in the presence of his wife and staff moments later.

Many beautifully preserved Civil War battlefields are now threatened by encroaching housing developments, shopping malls, and even race tracks (Brandy Station, Virginia). And Disney, Inc., with the honest intent of fostering Americans' interest in their heritage is prepared to destroy important adjacent battlefield lands in Virginia in order to build a facsimile of Civil War history called "Disney's America". (As of this writing Disney has scrapped the idea of locating it four miles down the road from Manassas Battlefield, but they are still considering other sites in Virginia.)

While is not realistic to preserve every place where our ancestors fought, it is vitally important to save as many as we can. We must be able to have these places to visit so that we won't lose touch with our history, our heritage, and the values that have made us Americans.

Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, commanding officer of the 20th Maine

Volunteer Infantry and hero of Little Round Top during the Battle of Gettysburg returned to this battlefield almost every year after the war until he died of his war wounds in 1914. Chamberlain, professor of rhetoric at Bowdoin College in Maine at the time he enlisted in the army, was a gifted speaker and writer whose excellent post-war book, The Passing of the Armies gives his first-hand account of the last years of the war. In a speech at a veterans' reunion at Gettysburg in 1889, Chamberlain expressed, as only he could, the reason why we need to preserve our battlefields. This well-known paragraph from that speech has become a rallying cry for many battlefield preservation organizations today:

"In great deeds something abides. On great fields something stays. Forms change and pass; bodies disappear; but spirits linger, to consecrate ground for the vision-place of souls. And reverent men and women from afar, and generations that know us not and that we know not of, heart-drawn to see where and by whom great things were suffered and done for them, shall come to this deathless field, to ponder and dream; and lo! the shadow of a mighty presence shall wrap them in its bosom, and the power of the vision pass into their souls."

Pvt. Chase asked, "Did we win?" This is the question we will have to ask ourselves in the future regarding the continuation and nurturing of our American Civil War heritage through the preservation of our battlefields. We must win; there is too much at stake to lose. ■



Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, Colonel of the 20th Maine at Gettysburg.

"The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here....we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain - that this nation shall have a new birth of freedom - and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth."

- Abraham Lincoln, from his Address at Gettysburg on Nov. 19, 1863 where the National Cemetery for the dead at the Battle of Gettysburg (July 1-3, 1863) was dedicated.

THE ASSOCIATION OF THE PRESERVATION OF CIVIL WAR SITES, INC.

While working in Fredericksburg for the Park Service last summer I also had an opportunity to do volunteer work for The Association of the Preservation of Civil War Sites, Inc. (APCWS). This fine organization has saved thousands of acres of battlefields from being lost to us forever because of the threat of unreasonable development projects. It was formed in 1987 when a number of individuals in the Fredericksburg area had seen Chantilly Battlefield turned into a housing development and urban growth threaten key ground at Salem Church, on the Seven Days battlefields, in the Lower

Shenandoah Valley, and at dozens of other places. The group agreed that the only hope for preserving historic ground lay in the creation of a non-profit organization devoted to purchasing land or the development rights to it. And so APCWS was formed.

Their stated goals are: To preserve, by donation, purchase, or legislative action, land on Civil War sites in all theaters of the War that otherwise would be sacrificed to development. The Association also supports local Civil War preservation efforts and works with county governments, state legislatures, and Congress to

enact legislation and acquire funding for battle field preservation.

The APCWS is in the forefront of the Civil War sites preservation movement. I urge anyone who wants to become a part of this important task to become a member of APCWS (\$25./yr). The address is:

Association for the Preservation of
Civil War Sites, Inc.
613 Caroline Street, Suite B
Fredericksburg, VA 22401

Tell Kitty Pam asked you to join!

"THE HONOR ROLL OF THE DEAD"



Continuing the original Sultana Survivors Associations' custom of calling out the names of the *Sultana* soldiers who had passed away since the previous reunion, we carry on by calling out the names of Union soldiers from the great state of Michigan:

18th Michigan Infantry: Goshener F. Smith, Harrison Van Court, James Watkins, William H. Finch, Albert W. Lawrence, George H. Brewer, John P. Barnum, Patrick Branigan, William N. Goodrich, Josias W. Jones, S. W. Jones, George K. Mason, David Millsbaugh, Anson Randall, Thomas Smith, F. S. Sprague, William Thage, Christian W. Abbaduska, E. Abraham Carell, Orlando M. Cole, Alexander Fuller, Gale Orris, Joel F. Harris, William H. Hindes, Y. F. Hines, Morgan L. Holmes, George Lackler, Joel Frank Nevins, Commodore Smith, Samuel B. Stubberfield, Alonso A. Van Vlack, George W. VanGorden, William H. Williams, Nelson D. Voglesong, William F. Fanrat, George W. Palmer, Michael Burns, James Calwell, Frank Henry Hampton, Lyman Haven, Patrick Lackey, Edwin G. Merrifield, Henry Thompson, Jason Vanatta, Charles A. West, Fredrick D. Zeeley, Hosea C. Aldrich, E. Burns, Harrison D. Plank, George C. Haight, Edward P. Barrett, Miles S. Frink, Simon Mattison, Conant Nichols, Freeman Smith, David S. Snyder, Frank Hampton, Seymour H. Main, Robert Patterson, Delascus B. Shafer, Harvey W. Upton, Warner S. Upton, Charles Deland, George A. Countryman, Thomas J. Hinds, Theodore N. Hines, Alex Hoy, Lemuel H. Latin, James H. Mann, Andrew J. McEldowney, Anthony R. Mette, Samuel Poupard, James Russell, Isadore Shettleroe, John Shettleroe, Samuel Soulier, George Stump, L. C. Suder, Edmond C. Welch, Abram B. Wicard.. . . .

(To be continued....)

 LETTERS FROM OUR SUBSCRIBERS

CAPT. D. N. LOWREY

This information comes from Patricia Kuhloff of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The somber face at right belongs to Pat's great great grandfather, Deming Norton Lowrey, an officer with the 115th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Lowrey spent most of his time in the service assigned to courtmartial duty in Cincinnati, Ohio or just across the river, in Covington, Kentucky. However, records then show that he was transferred to Tennessee and was "on special duty commanding Blockhouse #3 near Lavergne, (in) defences north of the railroad" on Dec. 5, 1864 when he was captured by Confederate forces and was sent to Andersonville Prison. Capt. Lowrey was one of the few officers on the *Sultana* when she exploded on April 27, 1865. He died. He was 37 years old.

He left five children from two wives. Pat is the great granddaughter of Deming Lowrey's son, George Harrison Lowrey. This family was from the Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio area.



PVT. WILLIAM HENRY SHEPARD

This information comes from Bessie E. Strobe of Paulding, Ohio.

Bessie's great grandfather, Pvt. W. H. Shepard was from Fostoria, Ohio and was in the 34th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. He was captured at Lynchburg, Virginia on June 18th, 1864. Bessie was told the following story by her grandmother, who was nine years old when her father, W.H. Shepard, died: "There were two men holding my father up in the water. He (William) was a large man and couldn't swim. The two men said they were all going to drown if they continued being in the water. They called (my father)' Shep.' So William said, 'Let me drown.' The men looked back and saw him go down for the third time. One of the men came to tell my mother (Alvina Shepard) what happened. This was what they promised: If anyone was saved they would go tell the family what happened. The promise was kept."



PVT. JOHN F. HARTMAN

Bonnie Knox of Mansfield, Ohio sent copies of service records regarding her great uncle, John F. Hartman, 102nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry. (Bonnie also sent an non-reproducible photocopy of a tintype of Hartman in a jaunty pose dressed in civilian clothes and hat.) His government papers are a perfect example of the many errors made by clerks when recopying information: some records show Pvt. Hartman having fair complexion and blue eyes; others say his complexion was "dark".

John was 21 when he enlisted but said he was 23. This may have been because when his younger brother Levi (age 19) enlisted at the same time as John in Ashland County, their father, "a Mennonite preacher and undoubtedly a pacifist" (Bonnie's notes) "went to the army camp in Kentucky and brought Levi home." Pvt. Hartman was captured at Athens, Alabama on September 24 by forces under Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest and was sent to Cahaba Prison in Alabama. Bonnie writes, "Family tradition says that a comrade wrote to his father after the *Sultana* explosion to tell him that John had been swimming well when another man in a panic grabbed his beard and pulled them both down. He is also supposed to have written that he buried him on the bank of the Mississippi near Memphis. Funeral services were preached at home on June 18, 1865 from 1st Peter, v. 24-25. There is a stone for him in the Nankin, Ohio Cemetery ...beside his brother Jacob."

Bonnie is a prolific researcher and is always on the lookout for any *Sultana* information. She also sent along the contents of a letter she received owned by Craig Wilson which was written by Sgt. Levi Boody (115 Ohio Volunteer Infantry) who survived the *Sultana* disaster. In a letter written on May 8, 1865 and sent to a friend who apparently worked for a newspaper. In it, Sgt. Boody gives the .."correct list" of men from the 115th Ohio, Companies C and G, who were "saved" or "lost". He ends his letter, "The boys are as well as could be expected, on the rations they get. You can judge whether they are anxious to get home or not, after five months of captivity."

Bonnie works in the Genealogy Department of the Wayne County Public Library at 304 North Market Street, Wooster, OH 44691. She has done quite a lot of research on Ohio *Sultana* troops from her area, and on others as well.

19TH CENTURY MEDICINE

Here are three "receipts" for various ills taken out of The Travellers Medical and Surgical Guide (1888), and the Medical Guide (1878). Try these at your own peril!

- For want of a proper physic, drink a charge of gunpowder in a tumblerful of warm water of soap-suds, and tickle the throat!
- For diarrhoea take a tablespoonful of castor oil and lemon juice; follow with a combination of Lead and Opium.
- For constipation: Sit in a quantity of cold water every morning for 15 minutes while rubbing the abdomen with cold water. Inject a wineglassful of cold water into the bowels and retain it while taking a brisk walk. Keep a wet bandage around the abdomen, covering it with waterproof sheeting and covering *this* with a dry bandage around the body, secured with tape, buckles, or straps. Eat a banana.

FROM THE EDITOR

On October 2 Larry and I went on an afternoon cruise up the Ohio River on the *Belle of Louisville*. This cruise, out of Louisville, Kentucky, commemorated the *Belle's* 80th year in service. She is the oldest steamboat in operation on the entire Mississippi River system and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1989.

I kept comparing this more recent generation of steamboat with the *Sultana*. Aside from the obvious differences of size (the *Belle's* length is only 167.6' compared to the *Sultana's* 260'), construction (the *Belle* is steel while the *Sultana* was wood), and the fact that the *Belle* is a sternwheeler while the *Sultana* was a sidewheeler, there are similarities: The three-deck layout, staterooms on the Boiler deck (2nd level), the "Texas" (crew rooms) and the pilot-house. I kept thinking that even with the extra 93', the *Sultana* would have been so small to be carrying 2400 ill soldiers *plus* crew *plus* passengers *plus* cargo. And as we toured the boiler room area and saw those gauges monitoring the steam pressure in the four boilers I couldn't help feeling a tad uneasy, knowing what happened to the *Sultana*. But it was a beautiful trip on a well-preserved boat; the day was lovely and we thoroughly enjoyed it!

We met some nice people who came from all over the country to go on the cruise, including a great many from Louisville. One was Alan L. Bates, who

was instrumental in establishing the Howard National Steamboat Museum in Jeffersonville, Indiana, and is an author on the subject of this type of boat. He has been a steamboat aficionado all his life and even crewed on them, including the *Belle*.



Photograph by Dan Dry.

I bought a marvelous book of his from him called The Western Rivers Steamboat Cyclopedium or, American Riverboat Structure and Detail, Salted With Lore With a Nod to the Modelmaker. This is a whole book full of excellent drawings showing the exact construction of a steamboat, step by step. Mr. Bates has also written at least three other books about steamboats and all can be ordered from The Steamboat Store Catalog, a new catalog put out by Jack and Sandie Custer, who also publish The Egregious Steamboat Journal, which I

have told you all about before. (I was able to meet and talk with the Custers on the *Belle* also.) The catalog has 19 pages of steamboat related items for sale including books (including Jerry Potter's The Sultana Tragedy and all four of Alan Bates'), model plans of many historic steamboats, such as the *Robert E. Lee* (but not the *Sultana* - how about it, Jack?), notecards, posters (a great one that I have showing the Cincinnati skylines of 1848 and 1993), recordings ("The Whistle Cassette Tape" [\$10.] sounds intriguing: "unique voices of 50 steamboats"), and videos, including a classic of the 1937 Great Flood of the Ohio River. You can order this catalogue (#1) for \$4. from the Custers at:

The Steamboat Store
Steamboat Masters & Asso., Inc.
P.O. Box 3046
Louisville, KY 40201-3046

As you will see below, Jack and Sandie are new subscribers to The Sultana Remembered.

Keep sending me *Sultana* stories and copies of photos to use in upcoming newsletter issues!

Please have a beautiful and safe holiday season.

PAM NEWHOUSE, Editor

NEW SUBSCRIBERS

- Mary Sanders, 7640 Castleton Pl., Cincinnati, OH 45237. Daughter of Samuel Jenkins, 3rd TN Cav.
- Jack and Sandie Custer, Steamboat Masters Association, 2316 Northwestern Hwy., Louisville, KY 40212