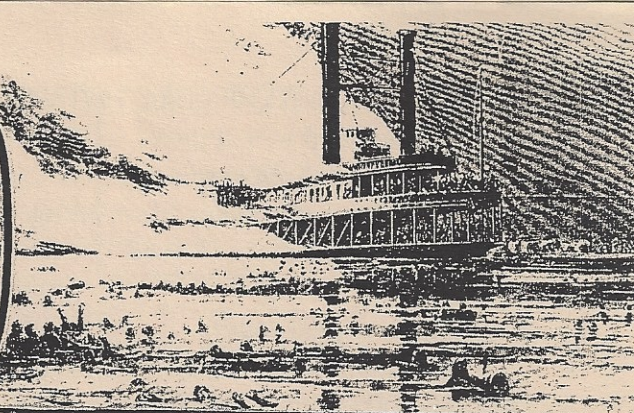


# the SULTANA REMEMBERED



Newsletter of the Association of Sultana Descendants and Friends

April 27, 1865

SUMMER 2005

## SULTANA REUNION 2005--RETURN TO VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI

by Norman Shaw

Another successful and fun-filled time was had by all at our annual Sultana Association meeting held a second time in Vicksburg, MS on April 8 & 9, 2005. The purpose for our return trip was to participate in the unveiling ceremony of a mural painted on the downtown floodwall by artist Robert Dafford which depicts the loading of the steamer Sultana on April 24, 1865, of recently released Union POWs. Our group had initially met in Vicksburg in 2002 to help dedicate a state marker, also near the waterfront, which explains how the Sultana's tragic story originated in this former Southern fortress during the Civil War. Did you know that last April 2005 marked the 140th anniversary of the Sultana disaster! (A professional videotape of the Vicksburg Waterfront Murals project has been ably led by Chairperson Nellie Caldwell over the last few years resulting in the painting of at least 10 previous murals identifying important events in Vicksburg's history. The cost of each mural is \$15,000. Our association passed the hat in 2002 and donated an initial amount of a little over

\$600 toward the cost of the Sultana mural. Thanks to the efforts of local resident Lamar Roberts as president of the Yazoo chapter of the Sons and Daughters of Pioneer Riverboatmen, the balance of needed funds was raised. For more information, visit [www.riverfrontmurals.com](http://www.riverfrontmurals.com).

Our group's gathering on Friday, April 8th, to set up displays and a time of greeting and sharing, and our schedule for Sat., April 9th (the 140th anniversary of the surrender of Gen. Robert E. Lee's army) was well planned by Pam Newhouse, Lamar Roberts, and Charles Dawkins. Following Sat. morning's Sultana mural ceremony, we traveled by bus to Vicksburg National Military Park to visit the remains of the raised Union ironclad "Cairo" and the museum

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**We are grateful  
to our Vicksburg  
friends for  
their hospitality and  
efforts in  
remembering the  
Sultana.**

there. Author Gene Salacker gave an informative talk concerning the explosion of the Sultana boilers using the authentic "Cairo" boilers as objects of explanation. After a tasty box lunch, we rode over to the Vicksburg Old Courthouse Museum where author and attorney Jerry Potter discussed the trial and conviction of Union Capt. Speed, the scapegoat of the Sultana disaster (the conviction was later overturned). Our last stop was the new location of the Vicksburg Battlefield Museum, owned by Lamar Roberts, next to our motel at the Battlefield Inn. Here, we saw an absorbing 30 minute video of "Life in Vicksburg During the Siege" followed by time to observe the numerous interesting displays.

Believe it or not, our Saturday was not over! After a few hours of revitalization time, we met at our motel's banquet hall at 7 p.m. for our evening meal and commemorative program. The main event was the showing of a 30 minute preview of the Sultana documentary produced by River Rock Entertainment with a special performance of the title song from the film by composer Jon Waterman of Salem, Mass. We also had time for introduction of special guests, Sultana update reports, about a three minute viewing of TV news coverage of our 2002 event by a Jackson,



MS, station, and a Roll Call of the Dead. We concluded with a moving memorial candlelight ceremony in which descendants recognized their ancestors who either survived or perished on the Sultana.

Next year we shall return to Knoxville, TN. The primary focus of the 2006 reunion will be the dedication of a supplemental stone marker in add those names of Tenn. Union soldiers who were not inscribed on the existing 1916 Sultana monument. I am aware of several names omitted which have been brought to my attention over the last few years by the men's descendants (you might recall that a few names have been added where space could be found). I know there are others. If you would like for your ancestor's name to be included on the second marker, let me know (but only for the Tenn. soldiers). My plan is to have the cost of the additional marker shared by all the families who participate in recognizing their soldier ancestor in this way.

You may be amazed to know that Pam and I have already discussed where to hold our next on-the-road annual gathering in 2007. We thought a good location would be in either Franklin, TN, or Athens, AL, to bring attention to those many Union regiments, including all of the 3rd Tenn. Cavalry, who had men captured in the fall of the forts in northern Alabama at Athens and Sulphur Creek Trestle in Sept. of 1864 or during the Battle of Franklin in late Nov., 1864.

In closing, we were all extremely happy to have in attendance once again our real son, Robert Warner, from Texas (father served in the 9th IN Cavalry) and real daughter, Glenna Green, from Tenn. (father served in the 3rd

TN Cavalry) and their families. Both have met with us over the last several years and both were in Vicksburg in 2002. I also need to thank everyone who make a contribution to the great Vicksburg, 2005, weekend, with special thanks to member Richard Troup who read an inspirational poem at Saturday's mural unveiling and had black ribbons printed to identify our 2005 reunion, much like the Sultana survivors did at their meetings.

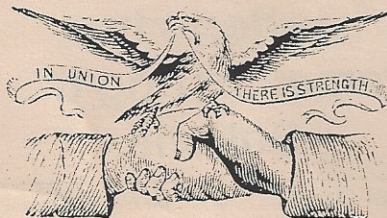
Make plans to join us for our next two reunions (exact dates in a future newsletter). See you then.

- Norman C. Shaw

#### FINANCES

2004	
Pass the hat collection	+409.00
Church donation	-100.00
Cost of bus	-215.00
Meal--food and supplies	-57.39
Riverboat ticket for speaker/guide	-12.35
Overage for next year	\$24.26
2005	
Pass the hat collection	+\$208.00
Pay meals for guests (4)	- 56.00
Travel Expenses for Jon Waterman	- 50.00
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$102.00</i>
2004 overage	+24.26
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$126.26</b>

Note: \$100.00 was offered to David Markland for the Sultana web site, but he preferred we use it for another need, so I think this money could help purchase a supplemental Sultana stone monument in Knoxville.



FRIDAY AUGUST 12, 2005

By Steven Jones  
The Selma Times-Journal

## Fire strikes Old Cahawba

Visitors to Old Cahawba state park will miss the old visitor's center, which burned down early Friday morning.

The center, a replica of Sen. John T. Morgan's childhood home, was apparently struck by lightning, officials with the Orrville Fire Department said.

"I'm heartbroken," Linda Derry, Director of the park said. The home wasn't a historic site, Derry said, but the lot was. "It was modeled after a house that stood on this lot," Derry said. "We had some irreplaceable artifacts."

Firefighters showed up too late to save any of the building. The structure was burning for some time before they were called, officials said.

They were able to contain the fire, by spraying the backside of the building with water, thereby preventing the spread to a nearby building, which was a historic site.

The building that was burned was only 13-years-old.

Derry couldn't be contacted as of presstime regarding insurance on the site.

(Update, from Carol and Jack Lundquist: "The fire marshall determined that the building was hit by lightning and it burned completely to the ground. The building was insured (computers and other equipment) but all letters and original letters and photographs and other items to do with Cahaba Prison where so many Sultana soldiers were held, were lost.")

Jack is going to reproduce for them copies of all the books and reference materials he had created and donated to Cahaba over the years and will keep everyone posted.

Just one more Sultana-related tragedy. - ed.)



# Captain Truman Marion Smith

*From the Mahoning Canal to  
Fighting Fire  
By Mary Milne Jamba*

I hesitate to call anyone my favorite ancestor, but I do have a great great grandfather that led a rather interesting life that is well documented. Although Smith can be a difficult name for genealogical research, I have found much about his family and am actually able to quote him directly.

Truman Marion Smith was born 6 February 1848 in Mercer County, Pennsylvania to Margaret Ann Stewart and William Smith. His mother was an Ohio pioneer, born in Austintown in 1807, who survived a vicious attack by Native Americans, that left her first husband, William Ludlow, and daughter murdered and scalped. Truman's father was born in Ireland in 1805 and somehow found his way to Pennsylvania by 15 April 1835, when he married the widowed Margaret Ann. The Smiths had eight children together, all born in Pennsylvania between 1838 and 1857: James A., Robert D., Eliza J., Walter S., Truman Marion, John W., Joel, and Margaret A.

Family legend holds that young Truman worked leading mules along the towpath of the Pennsylvania and Ohio Canal, also known as the Mahoning Canal. In 1860 the Smith family was living in Coitsville, Ohio. They moved to Allegan County, Michigan in 1862.

When he was just 16 years old, on 4 August 1864, Truman enlisted in company B, 8th regiment of the Michigan Calvary of the Union

Army. Three months later, he saw action in Henryville, Tennessee fighting the army of Hood and Forrest. Orders came to retreat, but his horse was gone. After three days of hiding and narrow escapes, he was captured. He escaped that night, but was later recaptured and imprisoned in Fort Misner.

Truman's compelling recollections about his experiences in the Civil War were published in Chester Berry's 1892 book Loss of the Sultana.

"We left in December for the Tennessee River. The ground was covered with ice and some of the boys had no shoes on - you could track them by the blood from their feet... The rebels pricked us with bayonets and drove us like cattle" eventually reaching Cahaba. "Our rations here consisted of about a pint of meal (ground cob and all) and that mouldy."

Truman spent the rest of the war under horrible conditions in the rebel prison. He was included in an exchange of prisoners, just a few weeks prior to Lee's surrender. "We were several days making the march. What a glorious sight met our eyes when we got there! On the opposite side floated the stars and stripes. Orders were to go to camp for the night, but I stole away and swam across the river and was once more under the old flag."

Finally, on 24 April 1865, Truman boarded the ill-fated steamer Sultana to begin his journey home. With a legal capacity for 376 the boat was grossly overloaded with about 2300 passengers, most of them Union soldiers who had been prisoners of war. "Every foot of her deck was covered with men who had fought starvation, vermin and filth... Memphis was reached without

accident... It was about midnight when the boat again started up the river, and just after everybody had got settled down to sleep, there was a crash and all at once confusion." One of the boilers had exploded! The ship caught fire and sank. The soldiers were in terrible physical condition and many didn't know how to swim. The icy cold Mississippi was more than a mile wide at that point and had flooded its banks with the spring rain.

Truman spent the night swimming and hanging onto a piece of wood, which he wound up giving to an unfortunate comrade from his regiment, Henry Norton. "I swam on trying to make shore. There was a large tree floating down the river and on the roots were three or four men. They were singing the star spangled banner." More than 1700 people were killed in the sinking of the Sultana, the greatest loss of any maritime disaster, worldwide to date.

Truman never completely recovered from injuries sustained that fateful night. From his pension records, I learned about the pain he endured the rest of his life. He had vision trouble that was helped somewhat from a 13-month stay at the Holmes Ear and Eye Infirmary in Chicago, sometime around 1869. He never found relief from his rheumatism and neuralgic ailments.

Truman Smith died 27 July 1927 at the age of 79 at the home of his daughter Elizabeth. He was buried in Fairplains cemetery, next to his wife, who had died several years earlier. Neither lived to see any of their five great grandchildren or their descendants. But, thanks to Truman's own writings, several newspaper articles about him, and his pension records we do get to know him. ■



*April 9, 2005 Unveiling: the Sultana Mural on the Vicksburg Floodwall*



ABOVE: This photo was taken moments after the covering was removed from the painting done by nationally renowned mural artist Robert Dafford (he is to the left of center in the sports coat). To the left of him is Bob Warner whose father, William C. Warner (9th Indiana Cavalry), survived the Sultana disaster. Next to Bob is the Association of Sultana Descendants and Friends founder, Norman Shaw. The tall slim guy standing at the far right of the painting is author and Sultana historian Gene Salecker; next to Gene is descendant Charles Dawkins, who is standing next to Pam Newhouse. On Pam's left in dark slacks is Glenna Green, whose father, Samuel Jenkins (3rd Tennessee Cavalry), also survived the disaster. BELOW: A detail of the mural.





## NEW ONLINE SULTANA DISCUSSION GROUP IS FORMED

Mike Marshall of River Rock Entertainment in Enid, Oklahoma has formed a new Sultana discussion group for those of you with computers. I believe that we can never have too many venues by which the Sultana's memory is perpetuated. Let's give this a try! -ed.

### To Join the Sultana Memorial Group:

Although this is going to sound like a lot of effort, joining the group is pretty painless. And the good news is that you only have to do it once.

1. Go to <http://www.google.com>
2. Above the empty box, click on "Groups".
3. On the left side of the page, click "Join" beside "New users".
4. Fill in the following information:
  - a. Your current e-mail address
  - b. Choose a password
  - c. Re-enter password
  - d. Nick name (optional)
  - e. Type the word you see into the blank box.
5. At the bottom of the page, before you click on "I have read and agree to the terms of use. Create my account", you might want to click on the "terms of use" link to see what you are agreeing to.
6. You will get a message saying that an activation link has been sent to your e-mail address. Click the "Click here to continue" button.
7. Go to your e-mail program, find the message that has just been sent to you, open it and click on the activation link. This tells Google that you know you are joining a discussion group.
8. Open a new browser window and go to <http://www.google.com>.
9. Click on "Groups" above the empty box.
10. Type "Sultana Memorial" (without the quote marks) into the box. Click on "Search groups".
11. Under the "Searched all groups" heading at the top of the page, click on "Related groups: Sultana Memorial". Click on "Join this group".
12. Choose one of the options under "How do you want to read this group?"
13. Type in your name or nick name in the box labeled "What nick name do you want people in this group to see?"
14. Click "Join this group".

### To Access the Sultana Memorial Group After Joining It:

You will need to follow these steps each time you want to check on what the group has been discussing.

1. Go to <http://www.google.com>
2. Click on "Groups" above the box.
3. Type "Sultana Memorial" (without the quote marks) into the box. Click on "Search groups".
4. Under the "Searched all groups" heading at the top of the page, click on "Sultana Memorial" next to "Related Groups".
5. On the left side of the page, click "Members sign-in".
6. On the right side of the page under "Sign in to your Google account", fill in your e-mail address and password and then click the "Sign In" button.
7. When you are finished with the group, make sure and click on "Sign out" in the upper right corner of the page.

## FROM THE EDITOR...

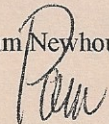
Just a word or two from me about the Reunion. It was so nice to see you all again and be in Vicksburg where all our connections began. I always feel when we get together that somewhere in the heavens the souls of our Sultana ancestors are beaming at the sight.

The folks in Vicksburg have been so helpful and nice to us. Bless Lamar Roberts and Nellie Caldwell! The Sultana painting on the city's floodwall is perhaps the best memorial to date. It tells the Vicksburg part of the story, which cascades into the REST of the story which took place above Memphis on April 27, 1865.

For those of you who have computers you can go to [www.riverfrontmurals.com/muralstore.htm](http://www.riverfrontmurals.com/muralstore.htm) and you will find the images of all the floodwall murals, including "The Last Voyage of the Sultana." The artist did much research in order to get it right. I think the most haunting thing is the sargeant in the foreground, staring at the viewers of the mural. He seems to be saying, "Come along, now! Hurry and get onboard!" Or, is he saying, "Are you SURE you really want to?"

You can order a \$40 gallery quality print (autographed by the artist, Robert Dafford). Only 250 of these were printed and when they are gone, they're gone.. You can also order a \$10 poster (the image size of both print and poster is 10" by 18"). And notecards (10 to a pack) are available for \$10. To place an order, send a check or money order to: Riverfront Mural Sales, 316 Marian Lane, Vicksburg, MS 39180. Add \$3.50 for shipping (you can order two for this shipping price). Any questions can be directed to Dave Gibson - phone (601)636-0987, or to him online at [dgibson52@bellsouth.net](mailto:dgibson52@bellsouth.net).

- Pam Newhouse, editor



## ABOUT CIVIL WAR PENSIONS.....

Applying for, trying to keep, and asking for raises of Civil War pensions could be a major part of veterans' lives.

A whole lucrative business was born - that of the "Pension Attorney" - because of the confusion and complexities of the pension system. I will do a feature newsletter article on this in the future. For now, suffice it to say that, while veterans/widows pensions were authorized in 1865, the criteria for getting and keeping one was changed many times. In 1926 an eligible widow was able to get \$50/month "...if the woman can prove that she was the wife of a soldier, sailor, or marine during his period of service in the Civil War." Truman Smith was receiving this princely sum in 1922 when he was 75 years old. His 1898 pension check, however, was for \$8. -Ed