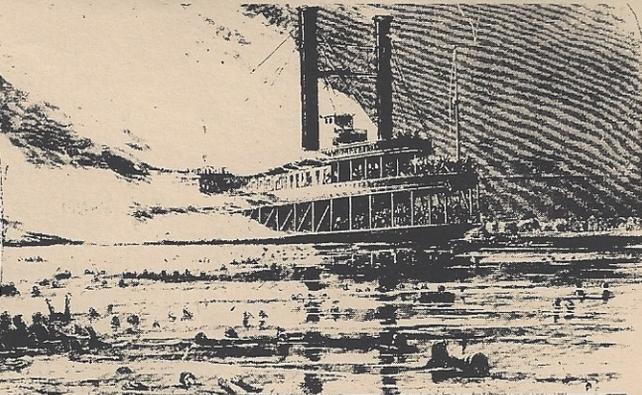


the SULTANA REMEMBERED



Newsletter of the Association of Sultana Descendants and Friends

April 27, 1865

SUMMER 2002

Sultana Reunion in Vicksburg a Great Success

By Pam Newhouse

Well, we did it! One hundred thirty-three people, mostly Sultana soldier descendants, attended the annual Association of Sultana Descendants and Friends reunion in Vicksburg, Mississippi on April 27 this past spring. This was our first venture outside of what has been our regular meeting place, Knoxville, Tennessee, and it was an amazing experience. (By the way, I still have some reunion attendee address lists available; if you would like to send me a self-addressed stamped legal sized envelope, I will send one to you.

In the past we have held a one-day reunion, but this time we expanded it to a whole weekend, enabling us to see and do more. It took a fair amount of planning, and involved a lot of people, but everyone did their part-and more- and it all came together nicely.

Folks started arriving on Friday afternoon, April 26th, at the Battlefield Inn. We had a large banquet room set aside for check-in, display of items that attendees brought, and sale of Sultana shirts, totes, and prints. The Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection Company sent 40 prints of the burning Sultana that sold quickly for \$10 each. This money was donated by the Hartford Company to offset reunion expenses, and was much appreciated. (This company was formed in 1866 as a direct result of the Sultana disaster. I will write a feature story about its history in an upcoming newsletter.)

We had a scare when Glenna Jenkins Green arrived with her daughter and son, Judy Vaughan and Maxie Green- all very shook up but all right after being involved in a bad car accident just outside of Vicksburg. It was a miracle that they weren't badly hurt, and we were so thankful.

Mike and Mark Marshall of River Rock Entertainment arrived early from Oklahoma and began interviewing descendants in a motel room which they had turned into a mini studio. The Marshalls are hard at work on a Sultana documentary, which is progressing well. They sent me a video "trailer" (a teaser/preview) of it, and it gave me chills. I think we are going to be very proud of the finished product. They are calling it "Soldiers of Misfortune: The Sultana Disaster." Tom Koba and Jennifer Wertz arrived as well, and set up a display about Koba Company's Sultana docu-drama, which is in the last stages of production. Tom has worked incredibly hard on this, going to great lengths to achieve authenticity. He has built steamboat decks and interiors, hired actors/actresses and reenactors, and is also doing a wonderful job. I know we are



THEIR FATHERS WERE ON THE SULTANA

Bob Warner of San Angelo, Texas and Glenna Jenkins Green, of Bakewell, Tennessee stand before the newly dedicated historic plaque at Vicksburg that honors their fathers. Bob's dad was in the 9th IN Cavalry, and Glenna's father was in the 3rd TN Cavalry. Just goes to show- calvarymen were determined survivors!

proud that these two production companies are honoring our ancestors in this way.

The next morning dawned bright and beautiful. It was the 137th anniversary of the Sultana disaster. After having a great breakfast at the motel, we headed downtown to the Vicksburg waterfront on two buses. One of the reasons we were in Vicksburg was to dedicate a Mississippi historic plaque, paid for by the city. The site is in a park which is very near where the Sultana actually docked and the men were boarded. At the 10 AM ceremony, after a Union reenactors' color guard presentation, we were welcomed by Vicksburg Mayor Laurence Leyens, who read a Proclamation declaring April 27, 2002 "Sultana Day" in Vicksburg. Comments were then made by Vicksburg National Military Park Historian Terry Winschel, author Jerry Potter, Sultana Association founder Norman Shaw, myself, and the person first suggested we meet in Vicksburg, Lamar Roberts, owner of the Gray and Blue Naval Museum. Lamar began the initiative to erect the Sultana plaque by going to all the city council meetings with the proposal, meeting with two Vicksburg mayors, and generally being a cheerleader for the event. Without Lamar there would have been no plaque and no Vicksburg reunion, and we are so grateful to this extraordinary man! (While I am passing out much deserved accolades here, I certainly can't forget to mention Charles Dawkins, descendant of Van Buren Jolly, 10th IN Cav., who, for months in advance, worked closely with Lamar and the Battlefield Inn to make sure everything was ready when we got there. He and his wife Della live in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, which is a ways from Vicksburg....but Charles made many trips and many phone calls to take care of what needed to be done. Thank you, Charles!)

The culmination of the Sultana plaque dedication ceremony was the laying of a wreath by Bob Warner and Glenna Green. Both of their fathers were on the Sultana and survived (see photo on the first page).

Just before the end of the ceremony Nellie Caldwell, representing the Vicksburg/Warren County Chamber of Commerce stepped forward and told us about plans to have renowned muralist, Robert Dafford, paint a mural on a panel of the Vicksburg Riverfront Floodwall. Please see complete information on this project

and how to donate on page 4. Many of us have already donated to this ongoing project. The cost will be \$15,000 and "would be a lasting tribute to the men who lost their lives on the Sultan." The event was well covered by the *Jackson Clarion Ledger* and the *Vicksburg Post*. There was a large color photo of Glenna and Ruth Coleman (attendee from Selma, AL) in front of the plaque the next day, as well as a nice article in the Post.

After the ceremony half of our group went shopping along Washington Street in Vicksburg while the other half ate lunch at the historic Biscuit Company Cafe. Then the groups switched and all were fed and ready to board the buses by 1 PM.

We then went to the Old Courthouse Museum which is the same courthouse where the trial of the only man every tried for his part in the Sultana overloading took place (see photo, next page). The courtroom is on the second floor, and looks just as it did when Frederic Speed heard the case against him. We all filed in and took seats, and Jerry Potter (author of "The Sultana Tragedy") regaled us with the circumstances surrounding the trial, and why Speed was ultimately exonerated. It was awesome, really, to sit in that place, on that day, and hear Jerry tell us about this.

We left the courthouse and then went out to the City Cemetery to the grave of Frederic Speed. I told the group something of the history of Speed, and how he came to end up in Vicksburg after the war. Then reboarded the buses for Camp Fisk.

Camp Fisk is about six miles outside of Vicksburg, and it was here that a temporary parole camp was set up to house Union soldiers were recently released from Confederate prisons Andersonville and Cahaba. By April 13, 1865, 11,000 men were housed here in tents, waiting to go home by boat. Gene Salecker (author of "Disaster on the Mississippi") now held forth (see photo next page), and told us the circumstances in which the soldiers now found themselves. The area that was the camp is still rural land, with a few houses here and there- so it was easy to visualize the scene as Gene portrayed it.

Soon it was again time to board the buses and make one last stop: The place at the riverfront where the Sultana was docked. The bus traveled the direction that the men did on the train, heading down through the part of town where, after the war, Frederic Speed built his mansion (no longer standing). We arrived at the corner of Madison

and Mulberry Streets where the men detained and started the six block walk to the boat. Some of us walked this last part, just as our ancestors did.

It had been quite a day. By 4:30 we returned to the Battlefield Inn, where we got ready for the banquet at 7 PM. Some folks went back in to the display room to visit with each other and look at the displays.

The banquet buffet meal was delicious. The Commemoration Program began at 8PM, with the customary welcome from Association founder Norman Shaw. After the Pledge of Allegiance, and Invocation by descendant Rev. Clinton Riddle, Glenna Green and Bob Warner each told us what they remember about their fathers, who both survived the Sultana. (Later Bob gave me a newspaper article telling of his dad's life, both before and after his Civil War experience, that appeared in a Kansas paper around the time of his death in 1933. This is extremely interesting and I know all subscribers would enjoy it, so I will be publishing in the next newsletter).

Glenna's father, Samuel Jenkins, was a doctor after the war and raised a large family. (She gave me a copy "Secret Recipes of the Jenkins Family", one recipe of which I have reprinted for you on page 5. Oh, it is sinful!)

We then sang the "Battle Hymn of the Republic", I read the "Roll Call of the Dead," and the Benediction was given by Rev. Riddle.

We moved on to the business meeting and Norman Shaw told us "How Our Association Began." Then Lamar Roberts told us about how "The Vicksburg Sultana Historic Plaque" came to be, keeping us laughing with all sorts of interspersed anecdotes! (We really appreciated Lamar participating in the day's/evening's events because he was originally supposed to be in charge of a very large affair at the Jefferson Davis historic home some miles away. This weekend included Confederate Memorial Day which Lamar certainly honors because he had something like 43 Confederate soldier ancestors!)

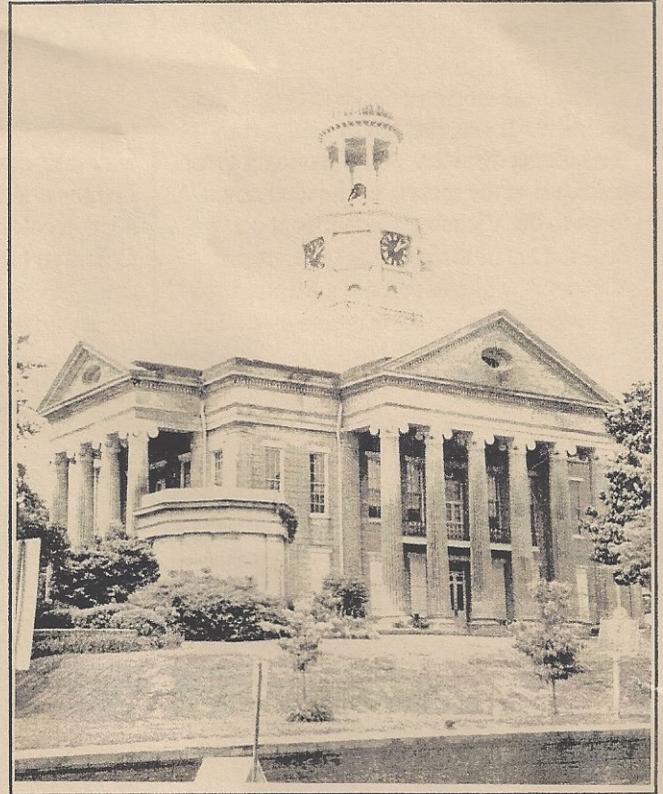
Tom Koba and Mike & Mark Marshall updated us on their Sultana film projects. We are excited and eager to see the results of both. The Marshalls interviewed many reunion attendees that weekend.

(Continued on page 5)

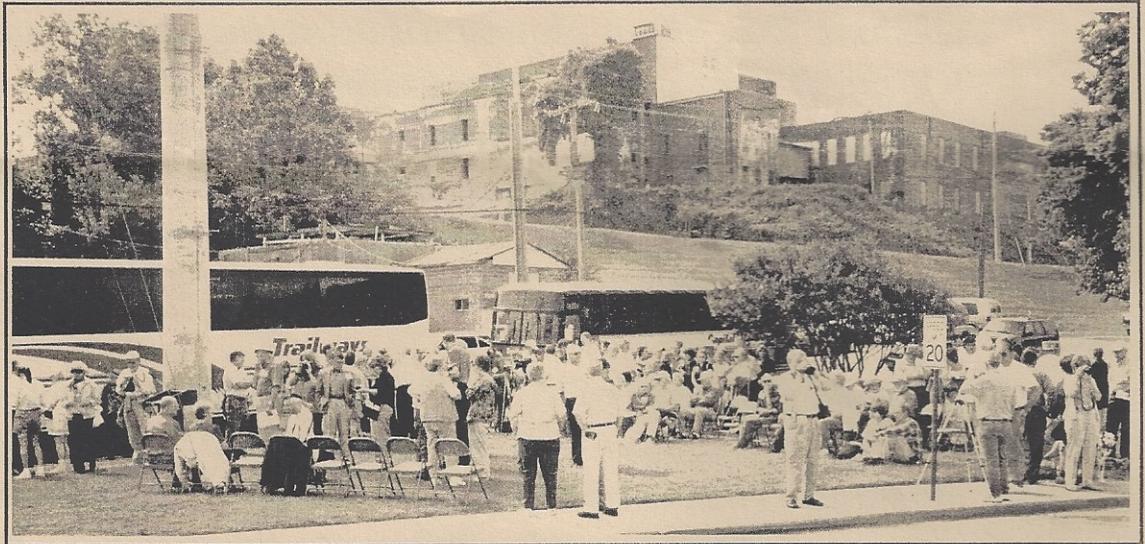
Reunion Photos



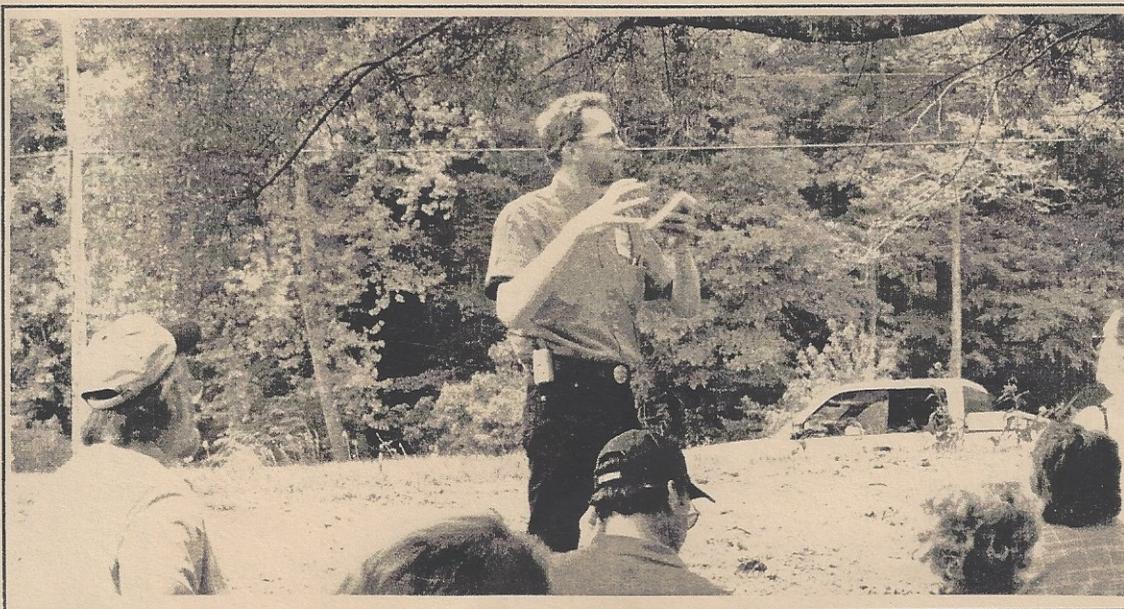
Above, L-R:
Charles Dawkins, Pam
Newhouse, Lamar Rob-
erts, & Gene Salecker at
the historic plaque
dedication site.



Above right: The Vicks-
burg courthouse where
the Frederic Speed trial
was held.

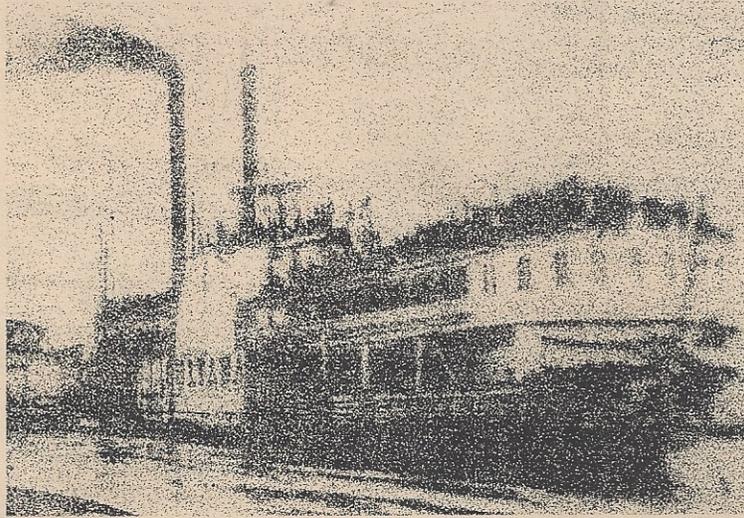


Above:
Sultana descendants
gather for the the
Saturday dedication
ceremony. The city of
Vicksburg is in the
background.



Left: Gene Salecker
holds forth at the site
of Camp Fisk, six miles
outside of Vicksburg.

Loading of the Sultana



Plans are in progress to have historical murals painted along the Vicksburg Riverfront Floodwall depicting many scenes of Vicksburg in the past. One significant event that took place at the riverfront was the loading of the Union soldiers onto the boat Sultana. Since the voyage of the Sultana was so tragic and noteworthy, we are very interested in this event as a subject of one of the murals.

The mural panels are 20' x 12' and will be designed and painted by the renowned muralist, Robert Dafford, from Lafayette, Louisiana. The cost of each mural is \$15,000. A mural of the Sultana would be a lasting tribute to the men who lost their lives there. All donations are tax deductible and checks should be made to The Vicksburg/Warren County Chamber of Commerce Community Fund and mailed to the Chairman of the Mural Board.

The chairman is Nellie Caldwell, 704 Newit Vick Drive, Vicksburg, MS 39183. For more information, you may call (601) 636-5893.

Finally, we closed the banquet and the reunion with a Candlelight ceremony. Folks who had an ancestor on the Sultana came forward and got a candle, had it lit, then stepped back. When all were burning brightly, Norman Shaw acknowledged the sacrifices that were made by all who were on the Sultana, then asked all whose ancestor died on the Sultana, or as a result of it, to blow out their candles. Most of the candles were blown out. The ones that were left signified the survivors who went home, and found a way to continue on with their lives.

I think that our ancestors would have been proud that we remembered them this weekend. I know that I was certainly proud to be there. ■

Glenna's Pound Cake

- 5 eggs
- 2 C. sugar
- 1 C. butter (no substitute)
- 1 tsp. lemon extract
- 2 C. plain flour

• Preheat oven to 325 degrees.
 • Cream eggs, butter, and sugar.
 • Batter will be real thick. Grease cake pan (Bundt); coat with sugar (not flour). Spoon into pan. Cook 45-55 minutes. Invert pan immediately. Very, very good!

• -Glenna Jenkins Green, daughter
 • of Dr. Samuel and Sallie Jenkins

Future Reunions

The next reunion (2003) will be in Knoxville. The McAlister family has done some wonderful landscaping around the Sultana monument at Mt. Olive Baptist Church. And Norman is going to put together a special Civil War-related tour for us.

In 2004 we are planning to be in Memphis. Kay Brockwell, Director of Economic Development in Marion, Arkansas is going to help plan an amazing agenda which will include going to the site where the Sultana rests.

Dates for both of these reunions (both in April) will be announced in the next newsletter. We encourage all those who have never attended to join us, and welcome back those who have.

SULTANA - WE'LL REMEMBER

• She headed north that April day
 • From down in Louisiana
 • On her side big letters gay
 • Spelled out the word, SULTANA.

• Her captain pushed her at top speed.
 • He dreamed of coming riches.
 • He could scarcely hide his greed,
 • 'Cause he'd fill all the niches.

• Vicksburg was the boat's first stop,
 • And he began conniving.
 • Just as he let the anchor drop,
 • His cargo was arriving.

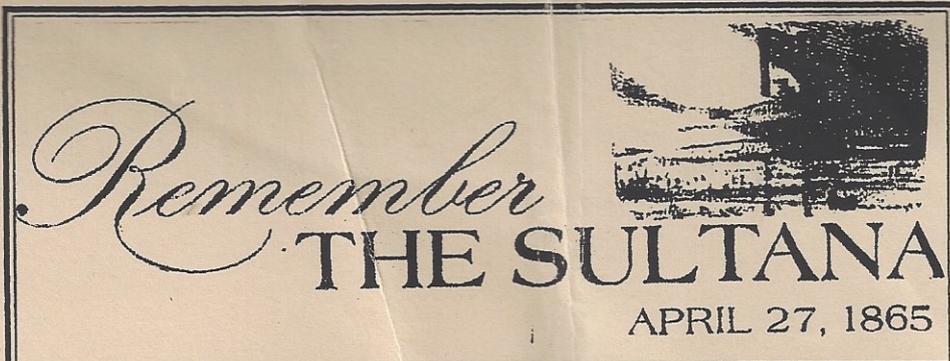
• That cargo was two thousand troops
 • Just released from prison.
 • And when they came on board in groups,
 • The captain's greed was risen.

• Five dollars was the price per man.
 • The total made him dizzy.
 • He said, "I'll take all, if I can".
 • Then he got real busy.

• That he took on way too many
 • He didn't really care.
 • Not another boat got any
 • But should have had a share.

• Something occurred we now hold dear,
 • A thing we wouldn't trade.
 • While she was at Helena's pier,
 • A photograph was made.

• Just north of Memphis about two
 • Sultana sped along.
 • Before her crew and captain knew,
 • Something terrible went wrong.



Sultana T-Shirts and Tote Bags for Sale

screen printed (dark brown ink)with the above logo (10" across) on cream colored Ultraweight 100% cotton (shirts) - and natural colored canvas square-bottomed tote bags. Shirt sizes: S, M, L, XL. (Request XXL).

Send \$10(check or money order), plus \$2 postage for each item to:

PAM NEWHOUSE, 4081 CLARK RD., ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48105

As boilers got hot, then hotter,
 They blew the boat asunder.
 Countless bodies hit the water,
 And most of them went under.

They looked for anything to float,
 So they could stay alive.
 But many died still on the boat
 While trying to survive.

Because of all the recent rain,
 The river was miles wide.
 Men's bodies were so racked with pain,
 They couldn't swim, and died.

We'll never know how many who
 Were lost in that disaster.
 But we have faith that they went to
 The bosom of their master.

Oh, there were some lived through that
 hell,
 And managed to survive
 And they had many tales to tell
 'Bout why they're still alive

Books have been penned about that
 night
 And monuments erected,
 But there's no marker at the site.
 That should be corrected.

The mem'ry is still glowing red
 Like a burning ember,
 And we'll never forsake our dead.
SULTANA, WE'LL REMEMBER!!

- Gene Shields, Descendant of Joseph
 H. Collins, 3rd TN Cav

April 29, 2002