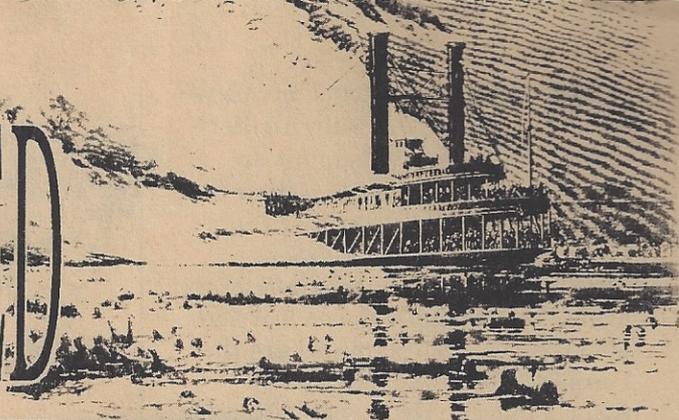


the

SULTANA REMEMBERED



Newsletter of the Association of Sultana Descendants and Friends

April 27, 1865

Vol. 1, No. 2, Fall 1990

The Battle of Franklin

(An unknown number of Union Soldiers who died on the Sultana were captured at the Battle of Franklin in Tennessee. They were sent to either "Castle Morgan" in Cahaba, Alabama or to the dreaded Andersonville Prison in Georgia for the remaining five months of the war. This is what happened during those "five tragic hours" at Franklin. -Ed.)

It was a battle that never should have happened. So says Thomas Young Cartwright, Curator of The Carter House that stood in the center of the Union line that day, November 30, 1864.

The war was winding down. Sherman was beginning his march through Georgia. General John Bell Hood's Army of Tennessee had tried desperately to divert him outside of Atlanta a week before, and it almost worked. But then, Sherman suddenly turned his army toward the sea with his now-famous comment that he "was going to make Georgia howl" to so dishearten the Confederacy that it would finally surrender. Hood, sensing that time was running out, then turned his army northward. His goal: Ohio and Kentucky, in one last attempt to take the war into Northern territory.

In order to get to the Ohio River, he would have to first deal with the Army of the Cumberland under Union General John Schofield, a former classmate of his at West Point (who graduated 7th out of 54 graduates in the Class of 1853; Hood ranked 44th). Schofield was "articulate, calm, reflective, and dispassionate"; Hood was "agressive, emotional, romantic, and reckless". Once the darling of the Confederacy, he was anxious to redeem his now-

faltering reputation due to recent lackluster leadership. (It is well documented that he was physically ill at this time, says Thomas Cartwright. One arm was shattered by a shell fragment at Gettysburg, and he had to be strapped onto his horse due to the loss of a leg at

"(The Battle of Franklin) was the bloodiest battle of modern times in any war. It is the blackest page in the history of the war of the Lost Cause. It was the finishing stroke to the independence of the Southern Confederacy. I was there."

- Pvt. Sam Watkins,
1st Tennessee Regiment,
Army of Tennessee



Chickamauga. He suffered from chronic fatigue and pain, for which he was taking pain-killing drugs, and was probably unfit for command at this time. T. Cartwright puts the blame on Jefferson Davis for placing Hood in command of the Army of Tennessee after removing Joe Johnston over more qualified Generals like William Hardee.)

On November 29th the armies clashed briefly at Spring Hill, Tennessee, then, incredibly, Schofield's entire army slipped passed Hood during the night of November 29.

When Hood awoke the next morning to prepare for battle and found the enemy gone, he was enraged. He blamed his army, suspecting the men of cowardice and his generals of coddling them. In this frame of mind he moved the army toward Franklin in pursuit.

Schofield was hoping to link up with General Thomas in Nashville before he had to face Hood, but he found one bridge over the Harpeth River just north of Franklin out and the other one badly damaged. He was finally able to get part of his wagon train over temporary pontoon bridges, but then he ran out of time - his intelligence told him that Hood's army was coming up fast and Schofield realized that he was going to have to fight at Franklin.

All things considered, Schofield's position here was good. There already existed partial earthworks just south of the town from earlier in the war. Now Schofield ordered his troops to further fortify what was already there by digging a ditch in front of the works, topping it with headlogs, and placing osage orange abatis in front of the ditch. The men worked furiously until about noon, and when they were finished Schofield was satisfied.

The Union line stretched about two miles in a "U" shape with artillery positioned at intervals to hit an attacking army head-on. Other guns were placed so they could sweep a large circuit and smash troops attempting to attack the flank of the army. Still, Schofield was worried about his eastern flank, where the Harpeth River was fordable at several places. He expected Hood to concentrate his attack there, and fortified this position with 3" rifled guns.

He felt that the strongest part of the line was the center, which was bisected by the Columbia Pike, a main road into town. On either side he had placed artillery; the 1st (U.S.) Kentucky on the east and the 20th Ohio 200 feet back and slightly to the west. The house of a prosperous farmer, Fountain Branch Carter, was about 60 feet behind the 20th Ohio and just slightly to the east, right next to the road.

Finally, General George Wagner's brigade was positioned about one half mile out in front of the main line of works to better observe Hood's movements. The land, gently sloping away from the entrenchments, was open field and the view was unobstructed for more than a mile and a half as far as Winstead Hill, where Hood had set up his command upon his arrival at Franklin that morning at 11 o'clock. It was not expected that Wagner's exhausted men would see much action that day. They were there to swing rapidly eastward in case of the expected flank attack and help check Hood until reinforcements arrived. By midday, the Union army was ready.

Twenty-three people, including the family, servants and neighbors had gathered in the sturdy brick Carter house that was now Schofield's headquarters. U.S. General Cox told them that it would be safe to stay there during the fighting because he was sure that Hood would not attack the Union center. A Carter son, Moscow Carter, a paroled Confederate colonel who was living at home at the time, agreed. So the inhabitants went into the basement to wait out the action.

Hood, peering at the well dug-in



enemy through his field glasses from Winstead Hill, made his decision about 4 PM: "We will make the fight", he said, and gave orders to his generals to form up the infantry for a direct frontal assault. Generals Cleburne (nicknamed "the Stonewall Jackson of the West"), Cheatham and others protested the action, saying it would lead to unnecessary slaughter of their men. General Nathan Bedford Forrest argued that he could accomplish far more and with less loss of life if he would be allowed mount the main attack against the enemy's eastern flank. Hood refused, and now, angered beyond all reason by their insubordination, grimly ordered them forward with their troops. As General Otho F. Strahl gave his men the order to move, he said, "Boys, this will be short but desperate". Strahl would be one of the six Confederate generals to be killed that day. (Seven others would be wounded, but would survive the battle.)

The view of the Confederate advance was awesome to the watching Union soldiers. An eyewitness, John Trotwood Moore described the sight: "The Confederates came on in splendid form. On the extreme right, Forrest's

* Thomas Cartwright notes that although this has been compared to Pickett's charge at Gettysburg, there are striking differences: 1) There was a 2 1/2 hour artillery barrage at Gettysburg before that charge; Hood ordered none at Franklin. 2) Pickett's men made one charge (one mile long) that took 55 minutes against a low stone wall; Hood's army made fifteen separate charges, initially going more than 2 miles against fortified works.

The Confederate charge at Franklin was also one of the few in the entire war that was accompanied by regimental bands playing.

cavalry rested on the river; then (came) Stewart's corps of Loring, Whitehall, and French from right left in the order named. On the left (were) Cheatham's corps, of Cleburne, Brown, Bates, and Walker. Behind Cheatham marched Johnson's and Clayton's brigade for support, eighteen thousand and more of men, in solid lines, bands playing and flags fluttering in the afternoon wind."

Wagner's brigade, which was out in front of the main Union lines, saw the whole Rebel army unexpectedly converging upon them. The Union men sent a volley of musket fire into the Confederate ranks, causing them to falter, but they quickly reformed and enthusiastically resumed the charge. No one present was authorized to give Wagner's brigade orders to retreat so they waited until common sense told them they could wait no longer, and then bolted back toward their main line. In the exultant Confederates in hot pursuit. As the Union troops parted to let them in, the Confederates dashed in with their killing and capturing as many as they could. ** Hand to hand fighting became desperate in the center. The Confederates kept coming, but they were running in murderous fire. Some units got up to the earthworks and couldn't go any further, but yet couldn't go back. They piled up in the ditch in front of the entrenchments and were picked off by Union men who held their rifles over the works and shot straight down at the trapped soldiers.

Col. Emerson Opdyke's 1st brigade, consisting of Illinois, Ohio and Wisconsin regiments, was resting in reserve behind the lines near the center of the battle line behind the Carter house. They

** 1,033 Union soldiers were listed as captured at Franklin, were taken to either Cahaba or Andersonville Prisons. Many ended up on the Sultana. Thomas Cartwright is compiling a list of soldiers from both sides who were captured or killed at Franklin and would like to hear from anyone who has a name to add.

The Confederates had 6,252 casualties; Federals, 2,326.

were exhausted after 24 hours of rear guard fighting that started at Spring Hill the day before. But now they surged forward with fixed bayonets and doggedly began to move the men in gray back.***

Meanwhile, just eastward across the Columbia Pike, near the Carter family's cotton gin, the 12th Kentucky (U.S.), Companies A & B, and the 65th Illinois, Co. A, (totalling about 320 men) with the equivalent firepower of 1,000 single-shot guns, were cutting down elements of Cleburne's division with their newly issued 16-shot repeating Henry rifles and 7-shot Spencers. This little-known fact, T. Cartwright says, is one of the big reasons why the Confederate advance was stopped on this side of the road.

Nearby, the 104th Ohio, also known as "The Barking Dog Regiment", was holding its own with the encouragement of its mascot, a dog named "Old Harvey". "He was barking his head off during the whole battle", says T. Cartwright. "He wore a collar that said: I'M THE DOG OF THE 104TH O.V.I., CO. F, WHOSE DOG ARE YOU?" (When the armies were resting in close proximity to each other Harvey would pass through the lines with Northern coffee to exchange for Southern tobacco. He was wounded three times during the war, but would survive and die a peaceful death years later.)

Confederate Major General Nathan Bedford Forrest and U.S. General James Wilson were engaged in a furious cavalry battle to the east of the town near the Harpeth River. After a heated contest, Forrest's two divisions withdrew, not being able to dislodge the Union cavalry from Schofield's flank.

Hood sent Johnson's division of Lee's corps against the Union line in

the darkness at 7 o'clock in one last futile charge.**** By 9 o'clock the last Confederates were finally withdrawn. All was quiet except the moaning of the thousands of wounded left on the field. Many townspeople went out on the battlefield to aid the men as they lay there by bringing water, medicines, and blankets; the ground was frozen and the night was bitter cold.

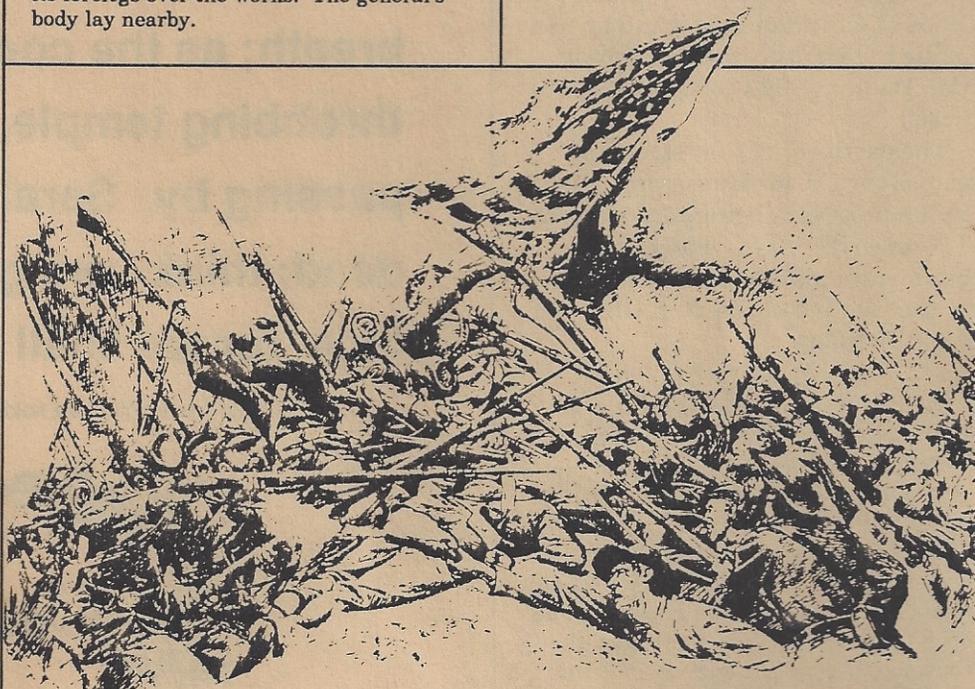
Forty-three homes in Franklin became hospitals that night and in the days to come, the largest being Carnton House, an elegant columned mansion southeast of town. The mistress of the house, Mrs. John McGavock, filled every room and hallway of her home with the dying, using all her linens and the family's personal garments for bandages. Soldiers would later remember that she moved tirelessly among the men offering help and comfort. Four dead Confederate generals (Patrick Cleburne, John Adams,***** Otho Strahl, and Hiram Granbury) lay side by side on the wide back gallery of the house. The McGavocks later turned their own nearby family graveyard into a permanent Confederate cemetery for those who fell there

***** General Adam's horse was found dead, its forelegs over the works. The general's body lay nearby.

that day. Mrs. McGavock personally saw to the burials, grave markings, and tending of the grounds for as long as she lived. (It is now cared for by the United Daughters of the Confederacy).

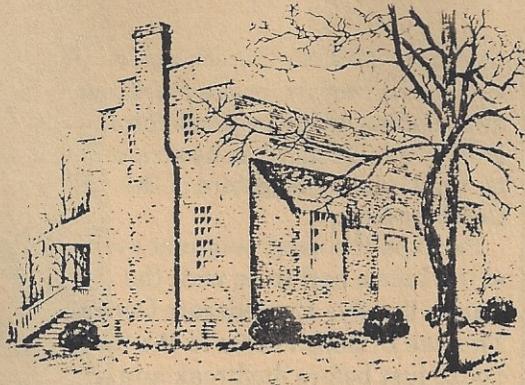
Perhaps the most poignant event of the battle had to do with the Carter family. Confederate General Thomas B. Smith came to the Carter house just before daybreak and led members of the family to where young Tod Carter lay mortally wounded. (He had been away from home for 3 1/2 years, fighting with the Army of Tennessee). While making an assault on the Union line with Brown's division, he had literally fallen in his own backyard, just 200 hundred yards from his home. His father and sisters brought him back to the house and laid him in the bed of the room where he had been born 24 years before. He lived 48 hours before passing away.

Amazingly, Hood planned to resume the attack the next day, but he found that Schofield's army had slipped away from him again, to Nashville, where, three weeks later, the two armies would meet again for the last time. If Franklin was the "death rattle" of the once mighty Army of Tennessee, Nashville was the death blow. ■



*** Renowned historical artist, Don Troiani, forcefully portrays this turning point of the battle in his latest work, "Opdyke's Tigers".

**** Franklin was one of the few Civil War battles fought at night, the winter darkness descending about an hour after the fighting began.



IF YOU GO TO FRANKLIN...

..be sure to stop by The Carter House, now a museum administered by the Carter House Chapter of the Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities. Curator Thomas Cartwright and a knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff including Scott Smith, Elouise North, Joyce Lee, Emmie Caldwell, Annie Gatlin, and Director Nancy Bassett will be happy to answer any and all questions. Tours of the house and grounds (including a kitchen outbuilding, farm office, and slave quarters) are regularly given. Start at the Visitor's Center at the rear of the property and first see the audio-visual presentation of the battle. After taking the 30 minute tour (\$3.), go back to the museum to see the fine exhibit of Civil War artifacts, including the saw that was used to amputate the leg of General Hood at Chickamauga. (And have a guide tell you the bizarre story of Col. William Shy's coffin on display here.)

The earthworks that stretched across the Carter House property is in the process of being reconstructed, T. Cartwright says. The first regimental marker has been erected at the position of the 20th Ohio Light Artillery.

- **The Carter House** is located at 1140 Columbia (US Highway 31 S), Franklin. Phone: (615)791-1861. Hours: (Nov.-Mar.) Mon. - Sat, 9-4. , Sun., 2-4. (Open until 5 PM, Apr.-Oct.) There is a Candlelight Tour on Dec. 1 & 2 from 5 PM to 9 PM in which many lovely old Franklin homes will be open to the public. On this night, the Carter House will be transformed into the field hospital it was after the Battle of Franklin. Don't miss it.

- **Carnton House and Confederate Cemetery** is located on Carnton Lane in Franklin. House Tour Hours: Mon.- Fri., 9-4. (Open Sat. & Sun. from 9-4, Apr. - Dec.) (\$3.)

FOR FURTHER READING....

- "Five Tragic Hours. (The Battle of Franklin)", McDonough & Connelly, University of Knoxville Press, 1983 - (paperback) This is probably the classic work on the subject to date. Fascinating reading.
- "Homespun Tales. (The Battle of Franklin)", Nancy A. Greer, Territorial Press,(Franklin, TN)

A collection of local residents' accounts of the battle gathered in 1930. Can be purchased from the Pioneers' Corner Association, P.O. Box 542, Franklin TN 37064 (Illustrations used for the preceding article are from "Homespun Tales" and were used by special permission from Pioneers' Corner Association).

- "Co. Avtch", Sam R. Watkins, MacMillian Pub. Co., 1962 - Earthy memoirs of a Confederate private in the Army of Tennessee.
- "Civil War Times magazine, (Dec., 1964)
- "Blue & Gray magazine, (Aug.- Sept., 1984)

"....But, O Sarah! If the dead can come back to this earth and flit unseen around those they loved, I shall always be near you; in the gladdest days and in the darkest nights, advised to your happiest scenes and gloomiest hours, always, always, and if there be a soft breeze upon your cheek, it shall be my breath; as the cool air fans your throbbing temple, it shall be my spirit passing by. Sarah, do not mourn me dead; think I am gone and wait for thee, for we shall meet again."

- letter from a Yankee soldier to his wife before the battle in which he died



FROM NORMAN SHAW.....

I hope all of you enjoyed the excellent job the the Blue & Gray magazine did on the August 1990 edition of the magazine featuring the Sultana disaster. It was a long time in coming, but well worth the wait. As a result of the article, I have been receiving inquiries from all over the country about the Association of Sultana Descendants and Friends. The memory of those men who were onboard is really being kept alive through all your interest.

If anyone did not get a copy of the August issue of the Blue & Gray, copies may still be ordered by calling the magazine's office at 1-800-541-0956 in Columbus, Ohio.

- Remember to set aside April 27, 1991 in order to join us for our annual Association meeting in Knoxville.

FROM JERRY POTTER.....

I am pleased to advise you that limited edition prints are now available of the Sultana disaster. The artist that did the painting which appeared in the August issue of the Blue & Gray magazine is now selling prints from a painting which she recently completed. I commissioned her to do this painting and I have the original. This is a beautiful painting of this tragic event. Following is information about the price the price of the prints and where they can be obtained along with some information about the artist:

"BURNING OF THE SULTANA - 1865"
by
Marion Sue Thompson

Limited Edition Prints are available of the SULTANA DISASTER based on actual photo taken at Helena, Arkansas, the day before the terrible disaster.

The edition is on High Quality, Acid free paper - image size 16" x 20" overall 19" x 23".

Regular Edition: 600 @ \$80.00
Artist's Proof: 100 @ \$100.00
Remarque \$130 - AP w/ Remarque \$150
Shipping Charge \$7.50.

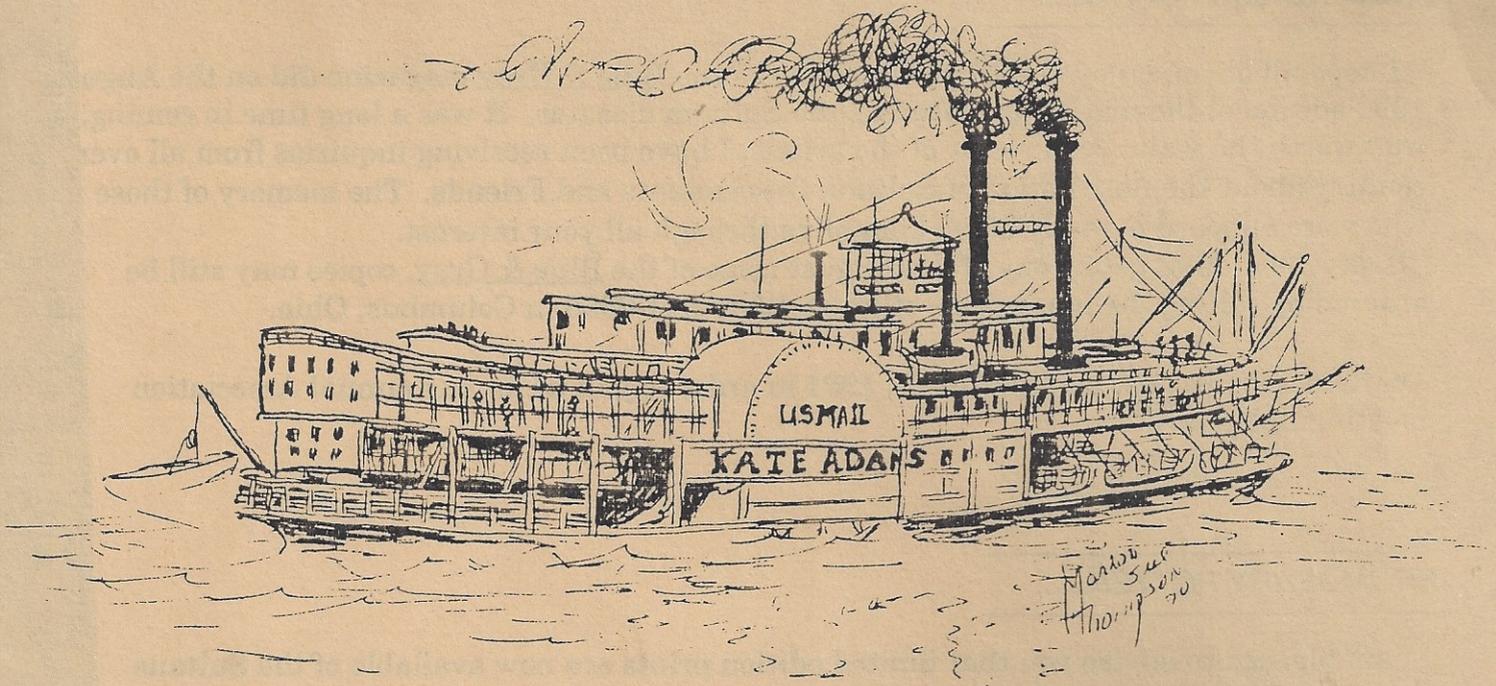
Money Orders, Visa/Mc or
Personal checks accepted

To Order:

Marion Sue Thompson, 4300 Brenda, Jonesboro, Arkansas 72401
or
The Frame House , 2400 Browns Lane, Jonesboro, Arkansas 72401
Phone - 501-972-0133
Phone 501-972-0670

(See other side for professional information about the artist, Marion Sue Thompson.)

MARION SUE THOMPSON



A watercolorist who creates paintings of authentic steamboats that plied the American rivers from the early 1800's through the present. She is also an accomplished landscape artist.

Marion has exhibited in regional, national and international shows, several in France. Her work is permanently exhibited in "Steamboat Rooms" of Hungry Fisherman establishments throughout the south. Her painting of the steamboat FERD HEROLD is in the permanent collection of the Mid-South Fair, Inc., Memphis, Tennessee. Her painting of the steamboat ARKANSAS CITY is in the permanent collection of the United States Navy on the USS ARKANSAS Nuclear Cruiser.

One man shows include New Orleans, Louisiana; THE DELTA QUEEN, Mississippi River, Memphis and Millington, Tennessee; Charleston, Missouri; Helena, West Memphis and Jonesboro, Arkansas.

Affiliations are Mid-Southern Watercolorist, Inc; Sons and Daughters of Pioneer Rivermen; American Society of Marine Artists; Arkansas Arts Council; Foundation of the Arts; National Museum of Women in the Arts; and the Arkansas Artists Registry, UALR, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Marion's paintings are in many private, executive and industrial collections. She is represented by THE FRAME HOUSE, Jonesboro, Arkansas; PENTACLE STUDIO, Clinton, Arkansas; and THE DELTA KING-STRICTLY NAUTICAL, Sacramento, California.

MARION SUE THOMPSON

4300 Brenda

Jonesboro, Arkansas 72401

Phone 501-972-0133

 BULLETIN BOARD.....

- New subscriber W. R. Morris of 10324 W. Stanley Rd., Flushing, Michigan (48433) has been researching the activities of the 2nd Tennessee Mounted Infantry (U.S.V.) and would like to hear from anyone who knows anything about six of this unit's men in particular: Jasper P. Bromley, Co. E; James Dicus, Co. D; John A. Greer, Co. E; John M. Grimes, Co. C; William Reese, Co. G; and John C. Throgmartin, Co. C. His research shows that these men were onboard the Sultana. (The 2nd Tennessee Mounted Infantry was a regiment that was formed in middle Tennessee. They were involved in several skirmishes - including one at Centerville, TN - with guerilla and regular Confederate forces. Some who were captured were possibly sent to Cahaba Prison.) Mr. Morris is also interested in learning more about Cahaba Prison.
- Another new subscriber, Bill Warren Mueller, sent information about the "Steamboat News" of which he is Editor and Publisher. The newsletter is the informational arm of the International Steamboat Society which is "for steamboat owners, builders, & dreamers". If you are at all interested in steamboats, past or present, I suggest you sign up! The address is Steamboating, Rt. 1, Box 262, Middlebourne, WV 26149 (Phone: (304) 386-4434. (Bill recently became fascinated by the Sultana disaster when he read a copy of "The Loss of the Sultana and Reminiscences of Survivors").

 FROM THE EDITOR.....

Since our last annual Sultana Association meeting in Knoxville this past April, Norman Shaw*, Jerry Potter*, Gene Salecker and myself have heard from a number of interested people around the country who either had some personal connection with the Sultana or are just plain interested after reading the in-depth article on the subject in the August 1990 Blue & Gray. I think I can speak for us all when I say that this is gratifying because it means we are doing what we set out to do: To keep alive the memory of those Union soldiers who so undeservedly died on the Sultana on April 27, 1865 near Memphis while homeward bound from Southern prisons.

Upcoming "Sultana Remembered" feature stories:

- "All about Steamboats" by expert and newsletter subscriber Gene Salecker - January, 1991
- "Andersonville and Cahaba Prisons" by Norman Shaw - April, 1991
- "Nathan Bedford Forrest" by Jerry Potter (whose ancestor rode with Forrest), July, 1991

Hope you all have a pleasant Fall and a wonderful Holiday Season!

- Pam Newhouse, Editor

* Those of you who have not been to a Knoxville annual meeting you might be interested to know who Norman Shaw and Jerry Potter are: Norman Shaw is a Knoxville attorney who, in 1987, was the organizer of the present Association of Sultana Descendants and Friends. Jerry Potter is a Memphis attorney who has been active in searching for (and finding) the final resting place of the Sultana. He was the driving force behind getting a historical marker commemorating the disaster erected on the bank of the Mississippi in Memphis, and has recently finished writing the most definitive book ever written on the Sultana and is now negotiating with a publisher.