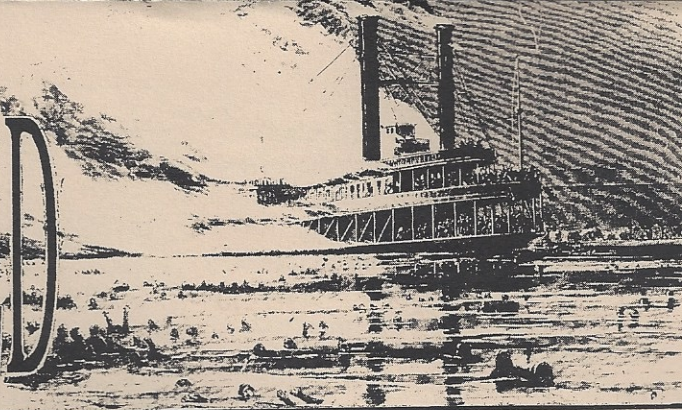


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SULTANA REMEMBERED



Newsletter of the Association of Sultana Descendants and Friends

April 27, 1865

SUMMER 2001

Traveling to Sultana-related Sites

By Gene Salecker and Pam Newhouse

(This past spring Gene and I had an opportunity to travel to places that have meaning for anyone interested in the Sultana and her unfortunate passengers. Gene traveled mainly by water; Larry and I, by land. What we saw and found was both intriguing yet sad. But they were truly trips to remember, and we want to share with you what we saw and heard.

- Editor, Pam Newhouse)

The Delta Queen Steamboat Cruise

- By Gene Salecker

From April 20-27 of this year I had the fortunate experience to be the guest lecturer and historian aboard the modern-day Mississippi steamboat *Delta Queen* on a special, historic cruise put on by History America Tours that promised to duplicate the route of the 1865 steamboat *Sultana*.

The *Delta Queen* left New Orleans on the afternoon of April 20, 2001, exactly 136 years to the day that the *Sultana* left New Orleans. The *Delta Queen* is a sternwheel steamboat (propelled by a paddlewheel from behind) and measures 280 feet long by about 60 feet wide. By comparison, the *Sultana* was a sidewheel steamboat (propelled by two giant paddlewheels on either side of her hull) and measured 160 feet long by about 62 feet wide. So, other than the way the two boats were propelled, you can see that we were traveling on a boat that was very comparable to the *Sultana*. (However, the *Delta Queen* has a few more cabin decks on it.)

The *Delta Queen* was carrying 176 passengers out of which 50 belonged to the

History America Tours group and had a special interest in the *Sultana*. And, out of the 50 people, there were about fifteen that were descendants of *Sultana* soldiers. Four families were there to represent: Sgt. Aaron Waterbury (17th MI Inf.) who perished; Capt. Deming Norton Lowrey, (115th Ohio Inf.) who perished; Pvt. Lucius W. Waters (125th Ohio Inf.) who survived; and Pvt. Wesley Lee (102nd Ohio Inf.) who survived. In fact, it was Pvt. Lee who was the first man to float down river to Memphis and warn the city of the explosion and burning of the *Sultana*. We were truly blessed to have these descendants aboard, and to bring their own personal touch to this wondrous trip.

In addition to having historian Ed Bearss along as our guide and interpreter, we had the rare privilege of having author/historian Steven Ambrose aboard. Steve was working on a coffee table book about the history of the Mississippi River and brought along a crew from National Geographic and a whole slew of photographers. Although Steve knew something about the *Sultana* prior to

"While at Camp Fisk we could see the railroad that took the men into Vicksburg (in April, 1865)."

- Gene Salecker

the trip, he learned a lot more before the cruise was over and wrote some very nice lines to be included in his book. At the same time, the National Geographic people were amazed by the story of the *Sultana* and interviewed myself and Ed Bearss, and most of the descendants, and stated that they may be doing a special feature on the *Sultana* in the near future.

The *Delta Queen* traveled up river and made a few stops where people would visit historic sites and antebellum plantations. On the first day I gave an overall lecture and slide presentation on the *Sultana* disaster, and on the second day, Ed Bearss gave us an overall view of Civil War prisons, concentrating on the horrors of Andersonville and Cahaba. The first stop in connection with the *Sultana* came at Vicksburg. We stopped there on April 24 and immediately boarded a bus for a tour of the Vicksburg National Military Park. Ed was our expert guide and he was simply captivating. He has a unique way of telling a story and had everybody spellbound as he recounted the movements of the different regiments and the actions of various generals as the two armies clashed in the summer of 1863.

After a tour of the gunboat *Cairo*, which was located by Ed in the 1960s and raised from the bottom of the Yazoo River after its sinking in 1863, we were off to touch base with some of the *Sultana* historic sites. To say the least, this was what all of us had been waiting for. Our first stop was at the location of Camp Fisk, the parole camp where the Union prisoners were kept before being placed on board the *Sultana* and other transports. There is nothing left of the camp itself but there are two large fields on either side of a small country road that gave us an idea of where the prisoner tents would have been posted. On the edge of one field, there was a slow moving creek, which was the only

source of water for the men.

At this point Ed handed the reins over to me, since I was on board as the *Sultana* expert, and I told a little bit about Camp Fisk.

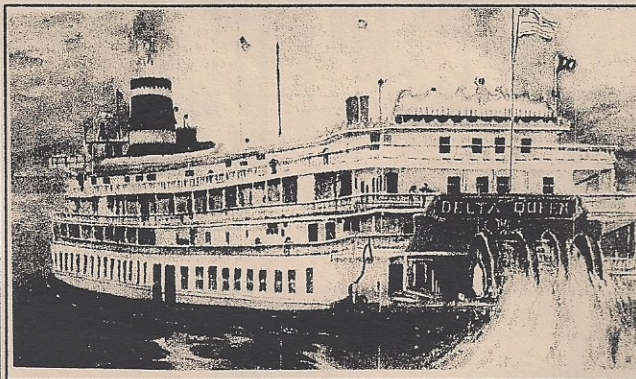
When the men first arrived at the camp they found their food to be rancid and spoiled. When they complained, fresh beef on the hoof was sent to them. As it turns out, the man responsible for the rancid beef was none other than Col. Reuben Hatch, the same officer that accepted a bribe from the *Sultana's* captain to help overload the boat. (Both Ed Bearss and I feel that Hatch is the real villain in the *Sultana* disaster.)

While at Camp Fisk we could see the railroad that the men used to take them into Vicksburg. Although the Civil War trestle is no longer there, the tracks are still being used and we could get a good idea of how the men were loaded and how they were brought into town.

From Camp Fisk we paralleled the railroad tracks back to Vicksburg and stopped at the location of the Civil War train depot, the end of the line in 1865. The depot is no longer there but again, we were able to get an idea of where the men got off the train to start their short walk down to the waiting steamboats. And, as our historic group was standing there, a freight train came by. This only added to the atmosphere of that fateful day so many long years ago. I am sure the engineer of the train had no idea why a couple of dozen snapshots were suddenly taken of his passing train!

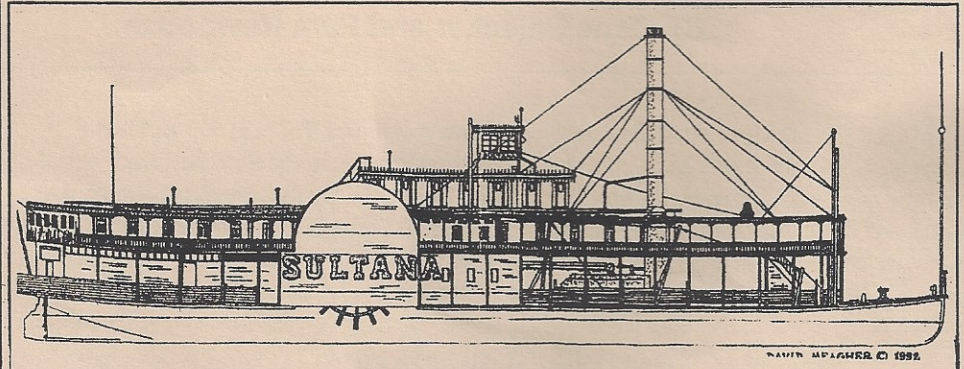
From the train depot our bus driver followed the same route that the paroled prisoners would have walked to get down to the Vicksburg wharf and the waiting *Sultana*. We traveled along Cherry Street to Clay Street, and then turned left and traveled down to the wharf. Ahead of us, as we turned onto Clay Street, we could see the river and in a little while, the *Delta Queen*.

While stopped at Vicksburg, Jerry Potter came on board the *Delta Queen*, and so we now had four knowledgeable historians traveling on this historic tour. And, as the *Queen* was going up river one night, Jerry and I stood on the dark deck and looked out at the passing water and shoreline. It was about 10:00 p.m. and all was peaceful and quiet. We could only imagine how horrifying it must have been for all of the people on board the *Sultana* that night in 1865 when the



LEFT:
The *Delta Queen*, a sternwheeler, built in 1926.

BELOW:
The *Sultana*, a sidewheeler, built in 1863.
(Scale drawing by David Meagher)



boilers suddenly exploded and every life was placed in peril. Jerry and I looked down at the cold, swollen river (swollen by the recent flooding in Minnesota) and could only imagine how frightening it must have been to be so rudely awakened at 2:00 in the morning and either shot into the cold, swirling water or pushed overboard by a frightened, panicked mob. Both of us wondered how anybody survived! In the darkness of night, it was hard to see the distant shore and impossible to judge distance. For a moment, both Jerry and I were in touch with the thousands of victims on that awful night. The *Sultana* victims truly deserve our respect and admiration for what they had to go through, and I gained new respect for anyone that survived that horrible night!

Although the *Delta Queen* did not stop at Helena, Arkansas where the famous overcrowded photograph of the *Sultana* was taken on April 26, 1865, Ed Bearss promised to point out to everybody where the vessel would have stopped and where photographer T.W. Bankes would have set up his camera. Almost our entire historic group crowded onto the forward part of the different decks in anticipation of seeing the famous place. Understandably, many photos were taken as we steamed past the historic site.

Finally, on April 27, 2001, exactly 136 years after the loss of the *Sultana*, the *Delta*

Queen stopped at Memphis, where our trip on the grand old lady came to an end. However, our historic *Sultana* tour was far from over. Getting into another bus, we traveled to Marion, Arkansas to see the newest monument dedicated to the *Sultana* victims. The monument was erected last year at Marion, since that was the site where many people who helped in the rescue of the *Sultana* victims lived.

From Marion we drove down a few old country roads until we came up over the Arkansas levee. At this point we were still about three miles from the river and spread out before us was open farm fields, stand of trees, and a fishing camp beside a small lake. Our bus descended into the fishing camp and then everybody disembarked. On the other side of the lake, in the middle of a soybean field, lay the remains of the *Sultana*. Due to the size and weight of the bus, this was as close as we could come to the actual burial site. Still visible was the distinct hump of Hen Island, on which the burning steamer had grounded before sinking beneath the brown waters of the Mississippi. Jerry, Ed and I gave impromptu speeches about those last few minutes in the life of the *Sultana* but everything hit home when Jerry pointed out that at this precise time, about 10:00 a.m., 136 years ago, the people of Memphis would still have been in the act

of rescuing people from the burned and sunken wreck. Again, there was a moment when all of us present felt in touch with the men, women and children that had been on board the *Sultana* so many years ago.

After climbing back on board the bus and leaving the curious men of the fishing community behind, we traveled to the Memphis wharf, the last safe stopping place of the *Sultana*. On the night of April 26, 1865, the *Sultana* had landed at Memphis to unload a cargo of sugar. About two hours after leaving the Memphis wharf, the *Sultana's* boilers unexpectedly exploded and placed the lives of everybody on board in the balance. In the 136 years since, the mighty Mississippi River has changed courses and the city of Memphis, like Vicksburg, has been cut off from the main river. Only a chute of the river touches Memphis now. Still, the Memphis wharf has changed little since the Civil War. While most everyone took pictures of the historic wharf, a few people went down and walked on the well-worn cobblestones that still make up the Memphis waterfront, the same cobblestones that were there 136 years ago when the *Sultana* came to town carrying over 2,400 people on a boat designed to carry 376.

From the Memphis wharf we went into town to visit the monument to Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest, perhaps the greatest cavalryman to come out of the Civil War. Ironically, it was Forrest and his cavalrymen that were responsible for putting more than half of the men on board the *Sultana*. During the summer and fall of 1864 Forrest had raided through Tennessee and Alabama and had captured thousands of Union prisoners. They were subsequently sent to Andersonville or Cahaba and eventually sent to Camp Fisk and the *Sultana*.

And finally, our historic *Sultana* tour ended with a trip to Elmwood Cemetery in Memphis. Immediately after the disaster, the few bodies that were reclaimed from the swirling floodwaters of the Mississippi, as well as the victims that later died in the Memphis hospitals, were buried in Elmwood Cemetery. Later however, when the National Cemetery was opened in Memphis, the soldiers' bodies were dug up and re-interred there. (Horribly however, during the move, the wooden coffins were dug up and placed aside to await reburial. The names of the

dead were marked atop the coffins in chalk for easy identification once they reached the National Cemetery. During the night however, a torrential rainstorm hit Memphis and many of the names were washed off of the coffins. Now, those victims lie in the National Cemetery under a headstone marked "Unknown Soldier." (This is only one more governmental screw-up in connection with the *Sultana* sufferers!)

To say the least, we had a wonderful, wonderful trip. Charlene Corris of History America Tours was the greatest host anyone could ask for. She was a joy to be with and helped in any way possible. Charlene had such a wonderful time on this trip that she has vowed to do it again in the year 2003. Although the trip is expensive, the ambiance of traveling on a real Mississippi steamboat (actually, the *Delta Queen* is the only steam-driven riverboat on the river, the others being propelled by diesel engines, and is herself listed as a National Historic Site) and experiencing all of the splendor and grandeur of the South, as well as the knowledge and wisdom of historians Ed Bearss, Stephen Ambrose, and Jerry Potter, made this trip well worth the price. I would encourage everyone to try to make the trip in 2003, especially if you had a relative on board the *Sultana*. For those few precious moments when you could reach out and experience almost exactly what those men went through 136 years ago, it was truly priceless! ■

In My Grandfather's Steps - By Pam Newhouse

In May of this year my husband Larry and I took a trip that would parallel the route that my gr gr grandfather took during his service in the Civil War.

Adam Schneider was 42 years old when he enlisted in the 183rd Ohio Infantry in the fall of 1864. He had come from Germany with his family eleven years before and was well known in the Cincinnati German community as the man who had attempted to assassinate Prince Wilhelm of Prussia in 1849. Certain Hessians in Germany hoped to stop Prussia from ruling the country and in doing so devised a desperate plan: They would shoot the Prince as he rode through their territory. Even though the attempt was made (by my gr gr grandfather Schneider) it failed, and after a year in prison and a long trial he was judged

"nicht schuldig" and released.

It is obvious that when Adam felt strongly about an issue he would go to great lengths to defend it. In fact, joining the army of his adoptive country at age 42 exemplified this. He must have firmly believed in the Union cause to have left his wife and three small daughters on that fall morning in 1864, dressed in blue. His youngest child, my great grandmother Elizabeth, was two years old.

Thanks to the Schneiders emigrating to Cincinnati, a large part of my family on my mother's side still live in this lovely city, the place of my birth.

As Larry and I headed downtown, I reflected, as I always do upon entering the "Queen City", about what it must have looked like in the Civil War years. Many of the old buildings from that time still stand, although the home where the Schneiders lived is gone. Sadly, the whole area now called "Over-the-Rhine" where the 19th c. Germans lived is much changed. The buildings are in bad repair and racial problems have recently spawned violence there. Cincinnati, as a whole, however, is still a vibrant, beautiful, hilly city and my relatives who live there are justifiably proud of it.

As we drove over the bridge (not there in 1864) to Kentucky, I looked down on the sparkling Cincinnati waterfront with its "Serpentine Wall," and imagined seeing John Litherbury's Boat Yard there, and the newly built *Sultana* being launched in January 1863. A state historical marker now stands in a park near this site. It honors the 791 Ohio soldiers who lost their lives on the *Sultana*; 50 were from Cincinnati.

Cincinnati and John Litherbury's Boat Yard is where it all began for the 2,400 Union soldiers who, if they survived April 27th, 1865, wished they had never heard of the *Sultana*.

Our next stop was Franklin, Tennessee.

Within weeks of leaving Cincinnati, the newly formed 183rd Ohio Infantry was in the middle of one of the most horrifying experiences of their lives.

It was a battle that never should have happened. 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.

Hood's former West Point classmate, Union General John Schofield was waiting for him with his Army of the Cumberland. They were well dug in, just south of Franklin. Conventional logic said that Hood wouldn't try a frontal attack on an army so fortified, but Hood defied such logic here. His army and the Confederacy would pay dearly for it.

The 183rd Ohio, being a "green" regiment, was placed in the center of the Union line near the Carter house, a position which was thought would see little action. But Hood ordered his army to attack the Union center and suffered the consequences: At the end of the battle four dead Confederate generals lay on the gallery porch of the McGavock family home, and thousands of boys in gray lay on the surrounding fields.

The Union army suffered many casualties as well, and, when their line was breached near the Carter house, prisoners were taken. One was Pvt. Adam Schneider.

I've always wondered: Did his lack of English seal his fate that day? Perhaps he didn't understand his orders. Or maybe he was just overrun by the oncoming Rebs.

Larry and I walked the grounds around the Carter House, noting the many 137-year-old bullet holes in the outbuildings, looked at the battlefield relics at the museum and Visitor Center, and talked with Thomas Cartwright and David Frayley. Thanks to these two and the rest of the staff at the Carter House, the events of November 30, 1864 are well interpreted and preserved. I would recommend that everyone visit the Carter House and the historic town of Franklin.

The next stop for Pvt. Schneider (and us) was the site of Cahaba Prison on the banks of the Alabama and Cahaba Rivers, about five miles southwest of Selma. The city of Cahaba, now nonexistent, was Alabama's first state capitol. Located on back roads, it would be easy to miss, unless you had good directions.

Old Cahaba and the prison site has been slumbering these many years. Only remnants of structures remain now, and of

these, there are few. Cahaba State Park is a quiet spot with many trees, located near the rivers.

Staff members Tommy Coleman and Don Harvell spent hours showing us around. The place where the prison building was located is open grassy land now, with some trees here and there. Nothing tells the visitor that there was ever a prison there during the Civil War.

Cahaba prison was originally established as a "holding pen" for captured Union soldiers bound for other prisons, such as Andersonville, and was never intended to be a permanent prison. (Indeed, some men who were on the *Sultana* had been in both places.)

It was first used after the Battle of Shiloh (April 6-7, 1862) when upwards to 2,000 men were held here before being sent on to other prisons. As early as 1863 the exchange system broke down, and by April of 1864 Gen. U.S. Grant forbade anymore exchanges. As a consequence, Confederate prisons became intolerably overcrowded.

By fall of 1864 Cahaba held over 3,000 men. On March 1, 1865 the flooding of the nearby Alabama River caused the prison to be filled with knee deep water. About 600 men were able to huddle together on the top bunks and in the rafters while the remaining 2,500 had to stand miserably in the water for over 48 hours.

Back in Selma we stopped by Linda Derry's office. Linda is supervising archeological digs which will take place at Cahaba. Digging must take place in order to establish the best way to interpret the total site. It is a slow process.

In the evening Tommy and Ruth Coleman extended some of that famous Southern hospitality and took Larry and I into Montgomery for a great Southern dinner and a nighttime view of the Alabama State Capitol building. It is absolutely lovely - located at the top of a tall hill (as in ancient Greece!).

We left Cahaba content, and pleased with those who are in charge there. I imagine my gr gr grandfather was happy to leave (sometime between March and April of 1865), because he knew he was going home. Little did he know that his future would be short.

In March or April of 1865 Adam arrived on foot at Camp Fisk, four miles out of Vicksburg. The group of prison-

ers he arrived with from Cahaba Prison had been transported by both boat and train before finally having to walk the last thirty miles from Jackson, Mississippi. The U.S. Sanitary Agent in Vicksburg filed this report on April 4, 1865:

There are now in camp four miles from here, about 4,000 prisoners, and more coming in every day. Those who came in first were from Cahaba, and were in much better condition than those now coming in, who are from Andersonville. The latter are in very feeble and distressing condition; every train containing more or less who have died upon the road. Yesterday an ambulance came in which started from Jackson with four sick men, and when it arrived they were all dead....."

Larry and I arrived in Vicksburg in air-conditioned comfort and drove downtown to meet with Lamar Roberts at his Gray and Blue Naval Museum on Washington Street. This is a wonderful place which houses the world's largest collection of Civil War gunboat models and the only diorama of the Siege of Vicksburg, as well as other exhibits and items for sale. Lamar has been instrumental in the initiative to have a state historic marker honoring the *Sultana* placed in a city park along the Mississippi River - close to where the boat was docked as she took on her fragile passengers on April 24, 1865.

Shortly after arriving we went with Lamar and *Sultana* descendant Charles Dawkins (gr grandson of Sgt. Maj. Van Buren Jolley, 10th IN Cav. Co. K) and his wife Della to meet with the Mayor of Vicksburg about this matter. His Honor, an ex-history teacher, assured us that he had included it in his budget for the year. (Note: And he did. Politics intervened, however, and a new mayor took office a few months later. We are told, however, that the project will still go forward. I will keep you updated in this newsletter.)

After studying an 1848 map of Vicksburg and comparing it with a present-day one we were able to see how much of the old city remained and could then locate significant sites related the *Sultana* story.

First we headed out to Camp Fisk. A stop at Vicksburg National Military Park and a conversation with park Chief Historian Terry Winchel confirmed that it was only two miles from the Visitor Center.

The camp site is open land and is bisected by a secondary paved road. Gene described it well in his previous article. It was a hot

day. I stood very still by the side of the road and paid silent homage to my grandfather and the others who camped there, waiting for the trains to carry them the four miles to the river and the *Sultana* in downtown Vicksburg. I collected a handful of wheat grass from the site and got in the car.

Next, we drove back into Vicksburg and down to the river, passing the spot where the men detrained at the old train depot before they walked the last few blocks to board the *Sultana*.

Captain Frederic Speed, one of the officers responsible for (over)loading the boat, was the only man court-martialed for his part in the Sultana disaster. He was found guilty as charged (for "not doing his duty"), but the decision was quickly reversed in Washington. Maine-born Speed stayed in Vicksburg after the War, married well, became a lawyer and a prominent citizen there.



Judge's chair in the courtroom where Frederic Speed was courtmartialed.

Larry and I went to the courthouse where Speed was tried. It exists today as The Old Courthouse Museum and was one of the few buildings in the city that was not destroyed by Union artillery during the Siege of Vicksburg in 1863. This place truly holds a treasure trove of local historic material! Gordon Cotton, the Director, gave us a tour of this fine old structure. Up on the 2nd floor was the

best part of all: The old 19th courtroom thought to be where Speed was tried. So perfectly preserved, you would think that the court is just in recess and will return at any moment.

From here we went to Bowmar Avenue where Speed lived in a large home (no longer standing), and then to the old city cemetery where he is buried. I think I expected a larger monument for this man who had lived such an eventful life, so it took awhile to discover the very modest stone which reads simply:

Frederic Speed 1841 - 1911

The sun was setting in Vicksburg. After an elegant dinner with Charles and Della at the historic Cedar Grove Mansion Inn, we headed to our riverside suite at the Isle of Capri Resort.

The men were loaded on the Sultana at Vicksburg on April 24th, 1865, after work was completed on a faulty boiler. She docked in Memphis on April 26th and began to head northward again late that night. At 2 a.m. the sleeping men awoke to an explosion and fire. Some, blessedly, never awoke, being killed outright by the conflagration.

Family stories say that Adam Schneider was standing near the railing after the explosion with his friend and fellow Cincinnati, Michael Conrad. They agreed to make an attempt to swim clear of the boat and meet back home. Only Michael kept his word; he arrived on the Schneider doorstep some weeks later to tell Catherine Schneider how her husband died. The details of what he told her are lost, but every year for as long as he lived, on April 27th, he would appear at the Schneider's door and "cry cry like a baby."

Larry and I arrived in Memphis and drove over to Marion, Arkansas. I had been, several times, to the old Memphis wharf area where the *Sultana* had docked before her demise. I didn't want to see it this time, nor the spot where she went down. Instead I chose to end our odyssey in Marion, at the DAR-sponsored *Sultana* monument outside City Hall.. Marion is the closest town to Mound City (now gone) where many of the citizens turned out to rescue and give comfort to the *Sultana* survivors whom they pulled from the river.. Some of the rescuers' descendants still live there - and still remember and honor those who were on the *Sultana*.

And so do I. ■

How Historic Facts Get Distorted

The following article appeared in the March 4, 1948 Vicksburg Evening Post. It was the featured story in Blaine Russell's column, "Vicksburgeseque." I am reproducing it exactly as written; grammar, punctuation, factual errors and all. My comments/corrections will be in parenthesis (). -Editor

Judge Frederick Speed

Captain Frederick Speed, settled here after the war, despite the fact that he was a Federal officer he became one of the city's most honored residents. Speed St., is named for him. Frederick Speed was courtmartialed, but cleared of blame in a steamboat tragedy. The military trial was brought up by the super-tragic explosion of the Steamer *Sultana*, in which over a thousand military and civilian lives were lost just above Memphis (more like 1,800). Frederick Speed was court martialed in allowing the *Sultana* to leave Vicksburg with such an overload of Federal soldiers but it was proven that it was really the passenger's faults because they mutinied in crowding aboard the *Sultana* in their eagerness to leave for home. (This outrageous statement is totally false. The reverse is true. There was almost a riot at one point when the soldiers refused to go on the overloaded boat) The *Sultana* was loaded at Vicksburg wharve with Federal ex-prisoners received at Four Mile Bridge, near Vicksburg, to be sent to Jefferson Barracks, Missouri (that's Cairo, Illinois) in late April 1865. A photo exists showing prisoners at the bridge, and one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six men were loaded on this magnificent steamer (don't believe I've ever heard it called that!). Her boilers exploded near Memphis in the period between April 23 and 27, 1865 (now I have a mental image of the boilers exploding on April 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27!). Captain Speed's court martial started on January 9 and ended June 5, 1866. He was convicted and sentenced to be dismissed but the decision was reversed by the judge advocate general and on June 21, 1866 Judge Speed later one of the highest Masons here (how many feet high?) and a beloved citizen.

Sultana Monument Landscaping

-By Mary Simmons McAlister,
Great Granddaughter of Sultana Survivor
John Lesley

At the Sultana meeting in 2000 I volunteered our family to landscape the area around the *Sultana* monument at Mt. Olive Cemetery, next to Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tennessee. My husband Bob and I met with the cemetery committee; Lemar Edwards, chairman; Ralph Fortnor and Jim McHarris. After we talked about what we wanted to do they agreed to our plan. They take great pride in the cemetery. I love standing under the old scarred maples and knowing our ancestors stood in their shade. Burned and broken but survivors. John Lesley died in 1929 scarred but still standing tall.

We decided to do the planting in February so the plants would get a good start before the hot summer. Due to a family health problem we were unable to do this and instead hired a landscaper to do the job. On Wednesday April 25th at 10:00 p.m. he called to say he could not do the planting before the meeting on Saturday. So my husband and I got

"sultanas"* and planted them in the pots at the monument. I contacted Mr. Edwards and we agreed our son Bob Jr. would do the landscaping. He started working on the project Sunday April 29th. Our Daughter Belinda McAlister from Houston, TX paid for half of the cost. The cemetery committee kept a close eye on the work and Jeff Hancock, the cemetery caretaker, was a tremendous help hauling the excess concrete and dirt off. Bob could not have completed the work as quickly without his help. The sidewalks at the monument were broken so our son removed them and the concrete up to the monument. He replaced this with terracotta tile. The contrast in color makes the monument stand out and looks prettier. He used metal stripping to outline the four pie shaped sections. He dug up the ground and added mulch, covering it with landscaping cloth, making slits for the insertion of the plants and covered that in pea gravel. One miniature holly, two miniature nandinas and three candy tufts were planted in each pie-shaped area around the monument. My husband and I went over on May 19th for the planting. There was a cool breeze, just enough to make the old maples sing. There was a bird nest in a knothole in the maple we parked under. We watched the birds feeding their young. I felt the

presence of the old soldiers and wondered if they had dinner on the ground near the monument trading stories about the night of the disaster. There is so much traffic in the cemetery. People stopped and asked our son the story of the monument and whom he was descended from. Mr. and Mrs. Edwards said they would take care of the watering and replace any plants as needed. I loaned him two of my books on the *Sultana* and invited him to a meeting. He was the one who found the obelisk and placed it back on top of the monument. When I was talking to him I asked about a square concrete log in front of the monument. He said he had found it in the storage shed at the cemetery. There had been some vandalism and this piece was taken off the top of the monument. I heard there might not be a pointed top to the piece. This may have been left unfinished to show that so many young lives were cut short.

* "sultanas" was the name given Impatiens by our 19th century ancestors.

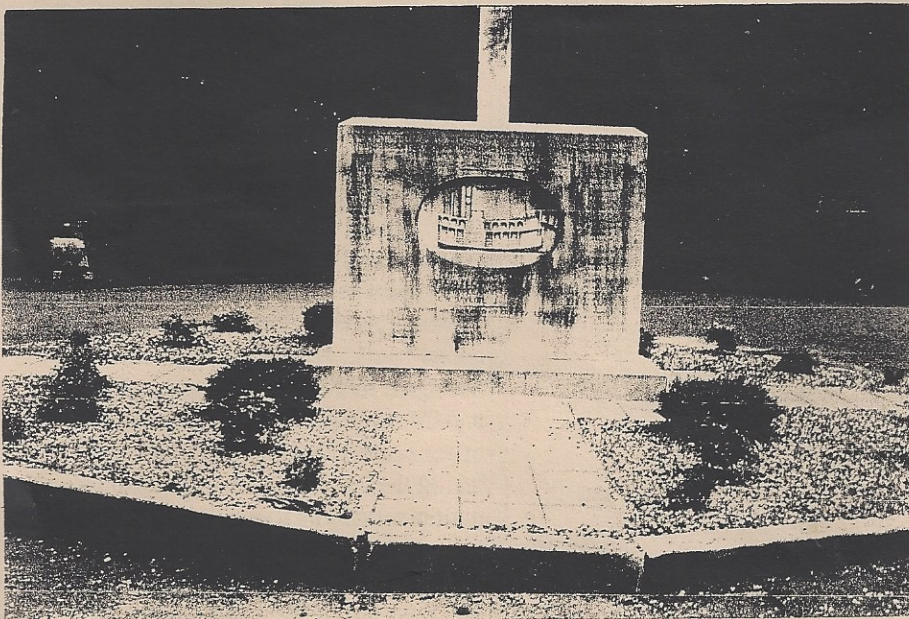
(Editor's note:

I'm sure I speak for all the Sultana descendants and friends when I tell the McAlister family how grateful we are for this labor of love. It looks wonderful!

The color photo shows the rose terracotta walkways and the plants set in well-mulched pie-shaped garden beds. For those who haven't seen what the area around the monument looked like before, imagine nothing there but sparse grass and you'll get the picture.

This monument was erected by Knoxville area *Sultana* survivors themselves in 1916. (They had tried for years, to no avail, to get the Federal government to do so.) For years it stood as the only monument to the *Sultana* tragedy. Now, there are various others, including state historical markers, but none is so imposing and poignant than this one that the ex-soldiers paid for themselves. The men would be proud to know that it is being so well maintained.

Thank you, McAlisters!



The completed landscaping around the monument in Mt. Olive Baptist Church Cemetery. Knoxville, Tennessee.

Two New *Sultana* Monuments

Two monuments will be dedicated this November to the soldiers on board the *Sultana* on April 27, 1865; one in Ohio, and the other in Michigan.

1) Mansfield, Ohio Memorial Plaque

A handsome free-standing metal plaque with 14k gold lettering (approximately 6 1/2 by 4 1/2 feet) will be given to the city of Mansfield and will be dedicated on November 10, 2001 at 2p.m. in South Park. It is in memory of the men of the 102nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry and reads: "In Memory of the 73 men of the 102nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry who died as a result of the steamship 'Sultana' blowing up on April 27, 1865 while returning 2,400 prisoners of war, on the Mississippi River. The result was the loss of over 1,800, the greatest maritime disaster in U.S. history. The 102nd Regiment was formed in Mansfield, Ohio and mustered in on September 6, 1862. This regiment lost the most men of any infantry regiment on the ship as a result of the disaster."

The names of the men are then listed by company.

The monument, which was paid for partly through private donations and partly through the sale of *Sultana* Association lapel pins designed by Richard Troup, cost \$2,900. Richard is the driving force behind this memorial initiative, and is the descendant of Pvt. Manuel Harnly, 102nd Ohio Infantry, Co. D. Harnly did not survive the *Sultana* disaster. There are still a small number of pins for sale, available by contacting Richard at 235 Poplar Dr, McConnellsville, Ohio 43756, Phone: (740)962-3610.

E-mail: ww2057@dragonbbs.com

There should be quite a nice turnout for this elaborate ceremony, and we hope that if any of you are at all close by you will drive over and be a part of it. Many Mansfield community organizations will take part.

South Park is located about two miles west of the downtown Central Park on Park Ave. Turn left on Brinkerhoff Ave. to enter the park. Civil War units wishing to participate should contact Richard.

2) Hillsdale, Michigan Memorial Monument

On Veterans Day, November 11, 2001, a six foot tall black granite monument will be dedicated on the county courthouse grounds of Hillsdale, Michigan. Chiseled into the stone, underneath an artist's etching of the *Sultana*, will be these words:

"Dedicated to the memory of the 280 Michigan Civil War soldiers who lost their lives in American's worst maritime disaster, the sinking of the steamship 'Sultana.' These men were among 2,400 Union soldiers returning home from Confederate prison camps on April 27, 1865 on the Mississippi River near Memphis, Tennessee.

The 18th Michigan Infantry, organized July 1862 in Hillsdale, lost 75 men, more than half their number who were on board that night.

We honor all who were on the 'Sultana' for their courage and service to their country."

Arkansas, Mississippi, Indiana, Ohio and Tennessee all have at least one memorial honoring the *Sultana* passengers, and now Michigan will be added to that admirable roster.

The monument will cost \$6,000, and frankly, we have a long way to go. The project is being paid for entirely by donations of individuals and organizations.

This project is chaired by Pam Newhouse, (gr gr granddaughter of Pvt. Adam Schneider, 183rd Ohio Infantry (died on the *Sultana*); Bene Fusilier, gr gr granddaughter of Pvt. Aaron Waterbury, 17th Michigan Infantry (also died); and Judie Warren, gr gr granddaughter of Orlando Cole, 18th Michigan Infantry (survived).

We especially hope that those of you who are descended from a Michigan *Sultana* soldier will give generously in order to insure the success of this effort.

Please send your check to:

Michigan *Sultana* Memorial Fund
c/o Judie Warren
2786 Glenbridge
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Thank you and God Bless.

For directions, time of ceremony or other information, contact Pam Newhouse, (734) 973-1047

Notes from Norman

The 2001 reunion was another great time of remembering the story of the *Sultana*. Our fellowship included eating, singing, stories, artifacts, family histories and presentations.

The sign up sheets indicate that about 75 people were present representing 10 states! My hat's off to those who must travel many miles to attend our event.

As a special treat this year we had about 12 Union reenactors to assist in our ceremonies at the *Sultana* monument and in the sanctuary of the Mt. Olive Baptist Church. Thank you, Robert Queen, Jr., for bringing your men from the U.S. 8th Tenn. Regiment. Appreciation also goes to Mike Cheaz for representing an Union cavalryman and to my attorney buddy, Butch Ashley, for playing taps.

We were additionally honored to have in attendance Kevin Smith with the Tenn. State Museum out of Nashville, Tenn. Kevin is an associate curator who is collecting artifacts and photographs related to the *Sultana* for permanent display at the State museum. If you could be a potential contributor, write to Kevin at 505 Deadrick Street, Nashville, TN 37243 or call (615) 253-0152.

I would like to pose a question: In 2003 shall we start alternating the annual reunion between here in Knoxville and an appropriate northern city? I shared this idea with Pam recently and we came up with Cincinnati, Ohio as one likely location since this is where the *Sultana* was built; a strong Civil War Round Table exists there, access is convenient via Interstates or plane (or boat?), and Pam knows her way around the place since this is her birthplace. To not overload Pam with extra messages, e-mail me at shawpan@msn.com to give me your opinions. I'll compile them and share the results with all. Note that the date of the *Sultana* disaster, April 27th, falls on a Sat. in 2002 so mark this day on your calendars for the next reunion here in Knoxville. Seeing the new landscaping around the monument will be a highlight.

Thanks again to all who helped in any way to make our last meeting a success, especially the a cappella quartet that my wife sings with, the Appalachian Harmonizers.

- Norman Shaw