

From Harpers Weekly

SUVCW

FORT DONELSON CAMP No. 62
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The Sultana Disaster

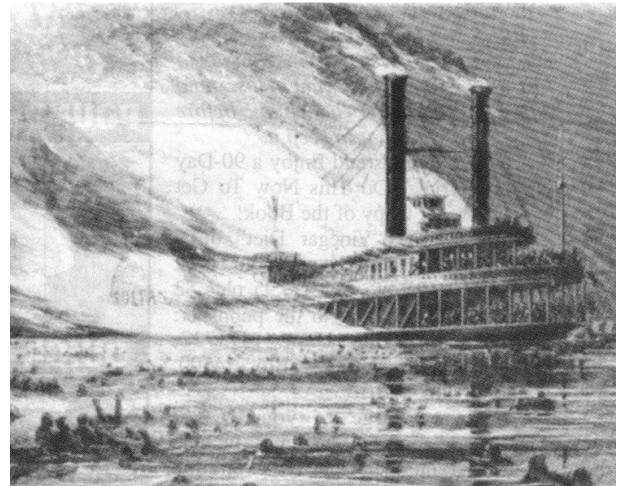
At around 2:00 a.m. on April 27, 1865, the greatest maritime disaster in American history occurred on the Mississippi River several miles north of Memphis when the steamer *Sultana*, overloaded with Federal prisoners recently released from captivity, exploded.

The *Sultana* was headed north, escorting men home who had survived the horrors of life in prison camps. The *Sultana* was designed to hold fewer than 400 men, but it had some 2,400 aboard when her boilers ruptured, killing scores instantly and sending hundreds of others into the cold and rapid waters of the Mississippi.

Nearly half of the ship was torn apart and what remained was soon in flames. Perhaps as many as 1,700 of the emaciated and sick Federal troops died as a result of this tragedy, which unfortunately was overshadowed by the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln just days earlier and the subsequent pursuit of John Wilkes Booth. Today few have ever heard of the *Sultana*, although everyone knows of the *Titanic*.

Many of those who died aboard the *Sultana* or in the river, as well as some of the survivors, had a direct connection to the Battle of Franklin. Many troops from Ohio and Indiana had been captured on November 30, 1864, and were sent south to Cahaba, Alabama, and Andersonville, Georgia.

Men such as Pvt. James Bayne, Co. D, 175th Ohio Infantry, musician John Gunther, Co. E, 183rd Ohio Infantry, and Pvt. John Chenoweth, Co. F, 57th Indiana Infantry, herded away as prisoners on November 30, lost their lives as they were finally headed home. Pvt. Jacob Christie, Co. C, 40th Indiana Infantry, would be among those who survived, but were forever haunted by the memories of flames, screams, hissing steam, and rushing water. As written in Jeremiah 49:23, "There is sorrow on the sea; it cannot be quiet."



Today the Sultana Association is a group which meets annually to remember those who were aboard the ship. On April 25-26, 2008, this group will hold their annual meeting in Franklin. It will be an opportunity for those who had ancestors aboard the doomed steamer and those with an interest in the Battle of Franklin to learn more about its many aspects.

From Historic Carnton Plantation Newsletter
 November 2007

CAMP COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

As the weather breaks and we enter this beautiful Tennessee spring season, I hope that this message finds the members of Fort Donelson Camp # 62 looking forward to our April 19 meeting. This meeting will not only give us the opportunity to become acquainted but will allow us to hear a presentation of Mr. Lincoln and to tour Fort Granger. Ken Early, Dept. of Tennessee Commander, plans to attend as do other SUVCW members from across the state. The meeting will be held at Dotson's Restaurant, a traditional Franklin eating place.

At the SUVCW Department of Tennessee Annual Encampment, FDC62 was awarded certificates for both the largest number and the greatest percentage of new members for 2007. However, in 2008 the Camp has lost three members. We regret that SVC Ronald Powell, a charter member, has encountered health issues necessitating his no longer continuing his membership. We appreciate his long service to the Camp. Another member has chosen not to renew, and an applicant, whose application was lost, has not reapplied. Camp 62 is still the largest camp in the Dept. of Tenn.

Also at the Encampment, we volunteered FDC62 to host next year's Annual Encampment to be held in Spring Hill, TN, at Ferguson Hall, where CSA Gen. Earl Van Dorn was murdered. Incidentally, his bloodstains are still on the floor. We anticipate good support from FDC62 members.

Grave registry information has been received for the ancestors of some Camp members. It is our hope that as many Camp members' ancestors and collateral ancestors for whom information is available will be registered. These men who sacrificed to maintain the Union deserve to receive this recognition.

In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty,

Sam Gant

FORT DONELSON CAMP # 62

**Meeting, April 19, 2008, 12:00 noon
Dotson's Restaurant, Franklin, TN
99 East Main Street**

Members of FDC62 and guests are invited to the meeting on Saturday, April 19. Eating at Dotson's Restaurant, with its 50's-60's decor and inexpensive menu, is a Franklin tradition enjoyed by local residents and tourists alike. Each group of tourists that I have accompanied for the past couple of years has requested to eat at Dotson's. Lunch at your own expense.

Following lunch and a very brief business meeting, Lincoln presenter Dennis Boggs will deliver his program.

After the Lincoln program, we will tour Fort Granger, built by the Union army in 1863, where there will be a small Union encampment. This is one of the best-preserved earthen forts in the nation.

A \$5.00 donation from each person attending the meeting will be appreciated.



Meet Mr. Lincoln

(a.k.a. Dennis Boggs)

Over the years, Dennis Boggs has researched countless books and papers, and has diligently designed a presentation that encompasses fifty-six years of Lincoln's life into a program that has something to offer audiences of all ages.

SUVCW NATIONAL GRAVE REGISTRATION

Pvt. Benjamin A. "Benage" McLerran

GreatGrandfather of Brother Richard E. Porter

Benjamin A. McLerran, b. 10 January 1844, d. 3 March 1920. Private, Co. C, 37th KY Inf.; Co. B, 4th Reg. KY Mtd. Inf. Enlisted: 19 August 1863; Discharged: 20 June 1865. Buried: Family Cemetery, 270 Hatcher Rd., Moss, Tennessee

Civil War Service

Pvt. Benjamin A. McLerran was a part of Stoneman's raid through Georgia in an effort to destroy railroads and free the prisoners at Andersonville. Surrounded at Newman, GA, McLerran and many comrades were captured and sent to Andersonville Prison. He was then transferred to Florence, SC. In prison, he developed a serious foot infection as well as a bronchial infection and rheumatism. He was paroled on Feb. 27, 1865.

Pvt. Jonathan Gregory

G-G-Grandfather of Brother David L. Eagan

Jonathan Gregory, b. 5 April 1843, d. 13 March 1924. Private, Co. E, 27th Reg. IN Inf. Enlisted: 1 September 1861; Discharged: 27 April 1863. Buried: Four Mile Cemetery, Co. Hwy. 225A, Dunklin, Missouri.

Civil War Service

Pvt. Jonathan Gregory took part in the 27th IN operations in the Shenandoah Valley including the Battle of Winchester and the Battle of Cedar Mountain. His regiment then joined Pope's Campaign in Northern Virginia and the Maryland Campaign. On 13 April 1862, some soldiers of the 27th discovered Gen. Lee's lost orders. This discovery led to the Battle of Antietam. The 27th's 440 troops engaged in the Antietam Cornfield, suffered 209 casualties. During Burnside's 2nd Campaign, "Mud March," Gregory became ill and was hospitalized. He received a medical discharge 27 April 1863.

NEWS in REVIEW

Preservation Trust announces national campaign to save hallowed ground at Parker's Crossroads — *Civil War Preservation Trust* — 2/7/08 — Parker's Cross Roads, TN — The Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT), the nation's largest nonprofit battlefield preservation group, today announced its first land acquisition campaign of 2008, the protection of 88 acres of hallowed ground at Parker's Cross Roads, Tenn., site of one of the war's most daring cavalry actions. "Another key piece of battlefield puzzle at Parker's Cross Roads is falling into place," remarked CWPT president James Lighthizer. "Once we have secured this property, we can claim that 75 percent of the battlefield is now permanently protected."

Fun film celebrates Lincoln look-alikes — *The Tennessean* — 2/9/08 — NASHVILLE

A documentary film about Lincoln presenters was shown at the Fort Negley Visitors Center. It is a tribute to Lincoln, but it focuses not so much on the man himself as on all of these Lincoln look-alikes and why they do what they do. It includes footage of two Lincoln "presenter" conventions (they don't like to be called impersonators) where you can see a whole room of Honest Abes milling around in their black suits and top hats. Following the film, Lincoln presenters Dennis Boggs, Mike Cox and John Mansfield engaged in a "Meet Mr. Lincoln" question and answer session.

Spring Hill battlefield again named to endangered list — *The Tennessean*, "Williamson A.M." — 3/17/07 — SPRING HILL — The Civil War Preservation Trust, a Washington, DC, nonprofit, again named Spring Hill's battlefield to its annual list of sites facing the greatest threat of be lost to development. The Spring Hill site has been named to the list every year since 2005.

CIVIL WAR ACTION

1 April 1863 — Federal expedition from Murfreesboro to Lebanon and Carthage
5 April 1862 — Military Gov Johnson suspends authority of Nashville Mayor and council for refusing loyalty oath
6 – 7 April 1862 — Battle of Shiloh
10 April 1863 — First Battle of Franklin
12 April 1864 — Forrest captures Fort Pillow
21 April 1863 — Federals occupy McMinnville
27 April 1865 — Steamboat *Sultana* explodes and burns near Memphis
6 May 1861 — Tennessee Legislature passes secession ordinance
16 May 1861 — Tennessee officially admitted to the Confederacy
4 June 1863 — Forrest's CS cavalry attempts to surround Federals at Franklin
6 June 1862 — Battle of Memphis – War's last "fleet action" on the rivers
7 June 1862 — Federals capture Jackson
10 June 1865 — President Johnson declares Tennessee restored to the Union
16 June 1863 — US cavalry drives John Hunt Morgan's cavalry toward Shop Springs
23 June – 7 July 1863 — Tullahoma or Middle Tennessee Campaign

UPCOMING EVENTS: April – June 2008

National Park Day: April 5 – Shiloh; **April 12** – Parker's Crossroads; **April 19** – Stones River — Volunteers throughout the country will work together to clean and repair grounds at 100+ Civil War sites

Fort Donelson National Battlefield (931-232-5706): June 26: Jr. Ranger Day, 10:00 & 2:00

Parkers Crossroads (731-986-5572): JUNE 14 & 15, 2008: Civil War Days – Living history and battle reenactment

Shiloh National Military Park (731-689-5696): April 5 & 6, 2008: 146th Anniversary Living History demonstrations — April 6, 7, & 8: Battlefield Hikes and Talks; School Days in May

Stones River National Battlefield (615-893-950): May 17, 2007: Echo Taps Worldwide – 11a.m.— May 24, 2008: Decoration Day - Placing flags on 7,000+ grave sites— May 24, June 7 & 21, 2008: Lantern Tour of Stones River National Cemetery — May 25, 2008: Memorial Day Service - 1:30 p.m.

Franklin, Tennessee: Carter House (615-791-1861): June 15 & 16: Children's Civilian Girls Camp — **Carnton Plantation** (615-794-0903): June 16 – 20, 2008: Camp Carnton for children — June 29, July 27, August 31: Sunset Concert Series



*Fort Donelson Camp # 62
Sons of Union Veterans
of the Civil War*

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Return Service Requested