

# HARDTACK

The Newsletter of the Indianapolis Civil War Round Table

Celebrating Our 50th Anniversary

October 2004

**TERRIBLE TRAGEDY !!**

## THE SULTANA DISASTER !!!

**HUNDREDS KNOWN DEAD,  
MANY MORE FEARED LOST**

**Explosion on Steamboat  
Leaves Wreckage in Flames**

**AN UNSPEAKABLE CARNAGE**

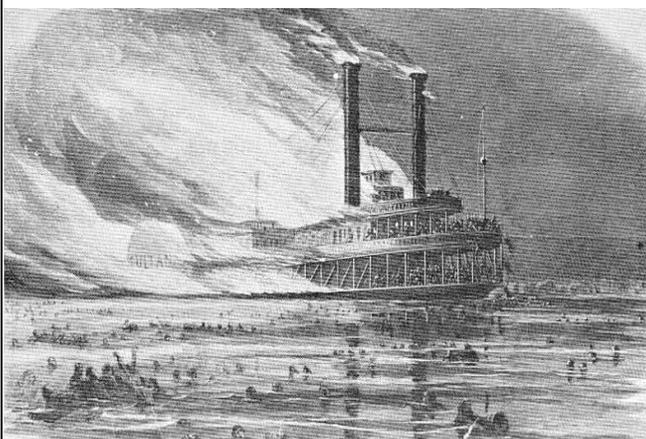
**Returning Soldiers, Women &  
Children Among the Victims**

**SABOTAGE SUSPECTED BY SOME;**

**Authorities blame defective  
boiler as the cause**

**All the particulars as reported  
by our Correspondent on the scene**

Memphis – The steamboat *Sultana*, believed to be carrying more than 2,400 passengers and crew, exploded and sank in the early hours of April 27, 1865, approximately seven miles north of this city. Hundreds are believed to have died in the blast and resulting fire; many others are known to have drowned in the swift currents of the Mississippi River.



The Dreadful Scene, early in the morning of April 27, 1865: The *Sultana* lies ablaze on the Mississippi River, approx. 7 miles above Memphis.

The tremendous explosion, which occurred about two o'clock in the morning on the 27<sup>th</sup> instant, could be heard up and down the river for several miles. Witnesses to the tragedy reported that the wreckage of the steamboat was quickly engulfed in flames. The fire cast a hellish orange glow upon the darkened sky and surrounding water, which was littered with debris from the boat and the bodies of the dead and the dying. Nearby vessels rescued many survivors of the blast from the river.

The precise cause of the tragedy has yet to be determined. Local authorities in Memphis believe the cause to be the steamboat's boilers, which had reportedly undergone repairs at Vicksburg and again in this City just prior to the incident. Others here suspect sabotage by Rebel sympathizers, who are known to have set afire several ships along the river.

The *Sultana* was crowded with hundreds of our soldiers returning to home after their release from Rebel prison camps at Andersonville, Georgia, and Cahaba (Castle Morgan), near Selma, Alabama. The steamboat, built in Cincinnati and two years in service on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, measured 260 feet bow to stern. It was registered to carry 376 passengers. The presence on board of more than six times that number calls out for an investigation of *Sultana's* captain, James Cass Mason, and the Army's officials in Vicksburg who are responsible for arranging transport home for our brave soldiers who have endured so much hardship at the hands of their Southern captors.

The Indianapolis Civil War Round Table gratefully acknowledges the co-sponsorship of  
**The Indiana War Memorial**

for our Speakers Program during the 2004-2005 Campaign

**PUBLIC NOTICE !!**

Early meeting called  
by ICWRT to address  
the Tragic Event:  
**October 4, 2004**

**Monday evening, at 7:30 p.m.**

Indiana Historical Society  
Auditorium

450 West Ohio Street,  
Indianapolis, Indiana.

**Our Program:**

**"The *Sultana* Disaster"  
presented by Pam Newhouse**

**About the Speaker**

Pam Newhouse is co-founder and Vice President of the Ann Arbor CWRT in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Ms. Newhouse is also a member of the Jefferson County CWRT in Madison, Indiana, where she and her husband own a historic home. She has served as a seasonal historian for the National Park Service at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park in Virginia and collaborated in the design of a troop positions map of the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee. Ms. Newhouse holds a Masters of Arts degree in historic preservation.

In 1997, Ms. Newhouse was the recipient of the annual Summer Scholar Award, given by the Friends of the National Parks at Gettysburg, to research the Codori Farm on the field of Pickett's Charge. The following year, she was a featured historian on the History Channel's "In Search of History" series documentary, "*Sultana: Mississippi's Titanic*." The great-great-granddaughter of an Ohio Civil War soldier who died on the *Sultana*, Pam Newhouse is currently the editor, designer, and publisher of "The *Sultana* Remembered" newsletter.



### The Indianapolis Civil War Round Table

2004-2005 Campaign



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## Join Us Before the Meeting for Dinner & Discussion at Shapiro's Deli!

All ICWRT members and guests are invited to join us at Shapiro's Delicatessen before the meeting to enjoy dinner and fellowship. This year, we will be holding informal "round table" discussions on a selected topic of general interest.

See you at Shapiro's, 808 S. Meridian St. (just south of  
McCarty Street) beginning at 5:30 P.M.



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#### **Reporters and Contributors to this Issue:**

Nikki Schofield, Vernon Earle, Tony Trimble, Dave Klinestiver

ICWRT News**Vernon Earle and Harry Smith Receive Lifetime Memberships**

At the September 13th meeting, President Tony Roscetti presented three honorary certificates to Round Table members. Steven Hill, immediate past president of the ICWRT during the 2003-2004 campaign year, was first recognized for his exemplary service on behalf of the Round Table during his tenure in office.

Longtime ICWRT members Vernon Earle and Harry Smith were each awarded lifetime memberships in recognition of their many years of service to the organization. Mr. Earle was on hand to accept his certificate from President Roscetti. Regrettably, Mr. Smith, who is now living with his daughter in Cincinnati, was unable to attend. Vernon and Harry join ICWRT co-founder Alan Nolan as the only lifetime members of the Round Table.

President Roscetti also announced that the ICWRT's Golden Anniversary celebration will take place at the April 2005 meeting. Ceremonies to mark the auspicious occasion are now in the planning stages. Later this year, a new book on the history of The Indianapolis Civil War Round Table and a commemorative Fiftieth Anniversary desk set will be available for purchase by our members.

The program for the September meeting was a presentation on the Battle of Stones River by Jim Lewis, a ranger with the National Park Service. Mr. Lewis provided an informative overview of this important but often overlooked battle, using first-hand accounts by some of the participants on both sides of the conflict. Mr. Lewis concluded his talk with a slide presentation of many of the exhibits and galleries which may now be seen at the newly renovated visitor's center of Stones River National Battlefield.

**Upcoming ICWRT Programs**

All meeting dates are on a Monday, usually the second Monday of the month. Please note, however, that due to a scheduling conflict with the Indiana Historical Society, **the October meeting will be held on the first Monday of the month—October 4<sup>th</sup>.**

October 4, 2004	<b>The Sultana Disaster</b>	Pam Newhouse, Sultana Association
November 8, 2004	<b>Civil War Music</b>	Dr. Wesley Hanson, ICWRT
December 13, 2004	<b>Indiana's Gen. Jefferson C. Davis</b>	Gordon Whitney, Author
January 10, 2005	<b>Berdan's Sharpshooters</b>	Gerald Jones, ICWRT
February 14, 2005	<b>Black Civil War Soldiers</b>	Dick Skidmore, Past-President, ICWRT
March 14, 2005	<b>Indiana Regimental Photographs</b>	Dave Buchanan, Col. Lilly Civil War Museum
April 11, 2005	<b>Draft Riots</b>	Iver Bernstein, Washington University
May 9, 2005	<i>Topic to be Announced</i>	Mark Neely, Penn State University
June 13, 2005	<b>Annual Banquet/ Battlefield Preservation Update &amp; Fundraiser</b>	Dave Duncan and Jim Lighthizer, CWPT

**RE-ENLISTMENT PAPERS AND DUES FOR THE 2004-2005 CAMPAIGN ... ARE NOW DUE!**

If you have not already "re-uped," please complete the enlistment form attached to this HARDTACK and mail it in today—or bring it to the October meeting—together with your check for \$25 (Individual Membership), \$30 (Family) or \$10 (Student).

## Preservation Update

### **UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP SAVES HALLOWED GROUND AT CHANCELLORSVILLE**

**Chancellorsville, Va.** – At a public hearing on September 13, 2004, the Spotsylvania County Board of Supervisors unveiled a proposal to preserve 140 acres of the historic Mullins Farm on Chancellorsville Battlefield. The deal is the result of a unique alliance between local homebuilder Tricord Homes; Spotsylvania County, Virginia; and the Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT).

“Two years ago, few believed that the Mullins Farm could be saved,” remarked CWPT President James Lighthizer. “Now, thanks to this unusual partnership, an irreplaceable part of Chancellorsville Battlefield will be protected for future generations of Americans. It is no exaggeration to say that this is the most significant battlefield preservation victory in a decade.”

The linchpin of the deal is preservation of 140 acres of core battlefield land associated with the opening clash of Chancellorsville. Tricord Homes, a local family-owned development company, acquired the eastern half of the Mullins Farm – 227 acres in total – in July of this year. Soon thereafter, talks began that resulted in an agreement that permits Tricord to build age-restricted housing on 87 acres of the farm in exchange for the protection of the remaining 140 acres. CWPT is contributing \$3 million toward the purchase of the preserved land.

“This is a real partnership where everyone wins,” Lighthizer noted. “Tricord is able to build quality housing for seniors, the county is getting open space for its citizens, and preservationists are getting a battlefield of enormous historic significance.”

Since 2002, the Mullins Farm has been the focus of a national campaign to save this important part of the Chancellorsville Battlefield. In March 2003, a proposal to build a 2,000-house development on the Mullins Farm was rejected by the county Board of Supervisors. In January 2004, a plan to put a highway interchange on the property was turned down by the local transportation authority. However, it was not until the Tricord proposal was announced Tuesday evening that any battlefield land on the Mullins Farm was set aside for preservation. “Tricord recognized early on that preserving the battlefield was the path, not the obstacle, to a deal at the Mullins Farm,” Lighthizer stated.

Although pleased with the Tricord deal, CWPT remains concerned that the western segment of the Mullins Farm remains slated for development. Lighthizer hopes to begin talks with Toll Brothers, the owner of the 566-acre western portion of the Mullins Farm, in the coming weeks. “There is still much more work to be done at Chancellorsville,” he observed.

With 60,000 members, CWPT is the largest nonprofit battlefield preservation organization in the United States. Its goal is to preserve our nation’s endangered Civil War sites and to promote appreciation of these hallowed grounds through education and heritage tourism. CWPT’s website is located at [www.civilwar.org](http://www.civilwar.org).

For further material on the Mullins Farm and the Chancellorsville Coalition: <http://www.chancellorsville.org>.

## Trimble’s Trivia

### **Quizmeister Tony Trimble’s latest brainteasers:**

1. **Who was the last of eight officers to be promoted to full general in the Southern army?**
2. **Name the Indiana lawyer and prosecutor who commanded a division at Stones River.**
3. **Name the commander in the Seven Days Battles who went on to become the Confederate wartime governor of his state.**
4. **Name the Confederate general, turned mountain explorer, for whom the second-highest point in North America is named. What is this geographic landmark? Where is it?**
5. **What weapon was improvised by General Gabriel James Raines during the retreat from Yorktown?**

---Answers will be published in the November issue---



## Calendar of Upcoming Events

- October 1-3:**      **140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reenactment of the Battle of Franklin, TN**  
 "National" reenactment on original battlefield at Spring Hill, TN  
 Spectator admission tickets now on sale at [www.battleoffranklin.com](http://www.battleoffranklin.com)
- October 2:**      **Randolph County CWRT: Mary Surratt** presented by Nikki Schofield  
 Randolph County Historic Depot, 115 North Howard St., Union City, IN; 7:00 PM
- October 2:**      **Civil War History Day Symposium, Chicago, IL**  
 The Chicago Historical Society  
 Call 312-799-2271 for reservations; Information online at:  
<http://r.vresp.com/?ChicagoHistoricalSoc/3fe77c38ff/228525/1ff9d5e94d/40328cb>
- October 4:**      **ICWRT: The Sultana Disaster** presented by Pam Newhouse  
 Indiana Historical Society, 450 W. Ohio St., Indianapolis; 7:30 PM  
<http://indianapolisicwrt.org>
- October 8-10:**    **15<sup>th</sup> Annual Blackford County Civil War Days, Hartford City, IN**  
[www.hartfordcitycwdays.com](http://www.hartfordcitycwdays.com)
- October 9-10:**    **Battle of Perryville Reenactment, Perryville, KY**  
 Civil War encampment and reenactment of the battle on the historic site  
[www.perryvillereenactment.org](http://www.perryvillereenactment.org)
- October 20:**      **Carmel CWRT: The Indiana Legion** presented by John Etter  
 Monon Depot, 211 First Street, S. W., Carmel, IN; 7:30 PM
- November 17:**    **Carmel CWRT: Armament During the Civil War** presented by Marvin Pike  
 Monon Depot, 211 First Street, S. W., Carmel, IN; 7:30 PM



We recommend confirming all dates, times and locations for events not sponsored by the ICWRT

If you know of a Civil War-related event that may be of interest to ICWRT members, please send your information to Norris Darrall ([norrisdarrall@hotmail.com](mailto:norrisdarrall@hotmail.com)).



### Report from the Field

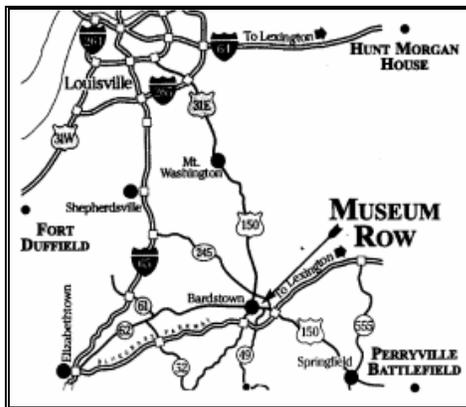
#### Civil War Museum in Bardstown, Ky. has Capt. Lilly's Mountain Howitzer

Earlier this year, Vernon and Pat Earle had an opportunity to visit the Civil War Museum in Bardstown, Kentucky (located just south of Louisville, en route to Perryville). Vernon reports to the HARDTACK that he found the museum to be "very complete and professionally presented," and recommends it to other Round Table members. The museum focuses on the War in the West and features hundreds of authentic artifacts including uniforms, cannons, flags and weapons. The museum, part of historic Old Bardstown Village, was voted the fourth finest Civil War museum in the U.S. by *North & South* magazine.

A recent addition to the Bardstovm museum tells the story of Women in the Civil War and their contributions as nurses, spies, soldiers and plantation and factory workers of the period.

For Vernon Earle, the highlight of the tour was seeing Captain Eli Lilly's 12-pound mountain howitzer on display. He has provided us with a copy of a placard that tells the story of this gun. Mr. Earle thought our members would enjoy reading it, and it is reproduced below.

The Civil War Museum at Old Bardstovm Village is located at 310 E. Broadway, Bardstovm, Kentucky, and is open daily March 1<sup>st</sup> through December 15<sup>th</sup> and on weekends in January and February. For further information, call (502) 349-0291, or visit [www.bardstovm.com/~civilwar](http://www.bardstovm.com/~civilwar). Vernon will have brochures available at the October meeting.



## CAPT. ELI LILLY'S

### 12 POUND MOUNTAIN HOWITZER

Captain Eli Lilly's civil war cannon - Serial number 68, Alger & Co. Model 1835, stamped 1850, 12 pound "Mountain Howitzer" used by Captain Eli Lilly and the 18th Indiana battery on the bloody battle of Chickamauga. Captain Lilly was the famous druggist and industrialist who enlisted in the Union Army and was given command of the 18th Indiana on August 20, 1862 which served in Cincinnati and throughout Kentucky until it was assigned to Wilder's mounted brigade fighting in Tennessee. It was during the Battle of Chickamauga that he was ordered to defend Alexander's bridge on the exposed union left flank. On the morning of September 18th, 1863 Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest was sent reconnoitering the Union left unaware of Federal movements as far as the bridge. When Forrest did spot the entrenched Union line he ordered up his chief of artillery Captain John W. Morton, to soften up the Union resistance in order to take Alexander's bridge. Captain Morton and Captain Lilly undertook a five hour long artillery duel, their batteries pummeling each other, with Lilly refusing to yield the bridge to Forrest's dismounted cavalry. When it became obvious that the Confederate onslaught would not be held back forever, Captain Lilly and his Mountain Howitzers pulled back. Credited with having held off Forrest long enough for Union troops to retire to the Viniard farm. This cannon also saw action at Chattanooga where it reportedly fired the first round straight into a church during a wedding, causing the congregation to flee into the streets. Captain Lilly and his 18th Indiana battery saw action for the remainder of the war as well including several engagements during Sherman's Atlanta Campaign and the pursuit of Hood after the Confederate defeat at Franklin. Shortly after the War in 1867, Captain Lilly donated the cannon to GAR Post #20 in his home state of Indiana.

*From the Bookshelf***The *Sultana* Tragedy Remembered and Retold**

Although the story of the *Sultana* may not widely known even among Civil War buffs, a number of books have been written on the tragedy. Here are some recent titles:



**The Sultana Tragedy: America's Greatest Maritime Disaster by Jerry O. Potter**  
(Pelican Publishing Co. 1992) 272 pages, hardcover.

**Disaster on the Mississippi: The Sultana Explosion, April 27, 1865 by Gene Eric Salecker**  
(Naval Institute Press 1996), 346 pages, hardcover.

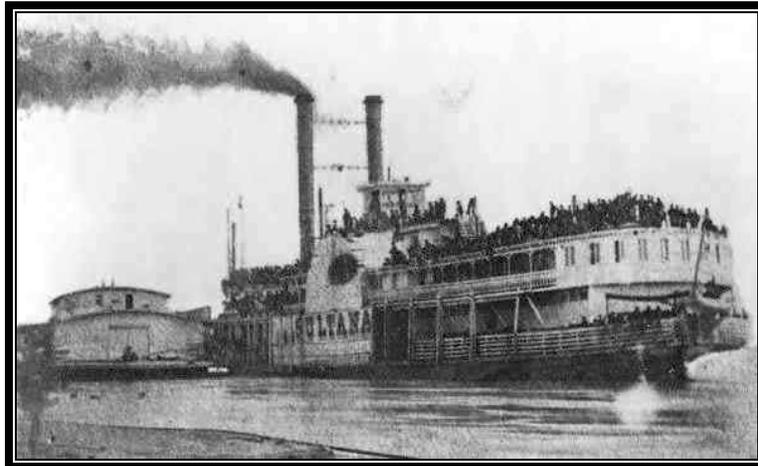
**The Sultana Saga: The Titanic of the Mississippi by Rex T. Jackson**  
(Heritage Books 2003) 136 pages, paperback.

A number of interesting and useful articles and reference sources pertaining to the *Sultana* can be found online. Our speaker this month, Pam Newhouse, is a member of the **Association of**

**Sultana Descendants and Friends**, whose website is: <http://www.sultanadisaster.com/sultorg/orghome.htm>.

The Association holds an annual reunion, publishes a quarterly newsletter, "*Sultana Remembered*" (edited by Ms. Newhouse), and maintains an online mailing list. You might also want to check out **The Sultana Disaster Online Museum and Archive** at: <http://www.sultanadisaster.com/previewhome.htm>

--Dave Klinestiver



A photograph of *Sultana*, seen overcrowded with passengers, taken at Helena, Arkansas, the afternoon prior to the explosion.

**HARDTACK**, the newsletter of The Indianapolis Civil War Round Table, is published monthly, September through June, each year. In addition to information about upcoming programs, HARDTACK features articles, news, reviews and a calendar of Civil War-related events. HARDTACK is distributed by mail or email to all ICWRT members.

If you have a short article, book review or some other item that may be of interest to our members, we invite you to submit it for consideration. Please send your material via email to the editor at: [HardtackEditor@comcast.net](mailto:HardtackEditor@comcast.net). Please include a telephone number and email address where we may contact you.

Visit the website of The Indianapolis Civil War Round Table: <http://indianapoliswrt.org/>

## **Time to Re-enlist for the 2004-2005 Campaign !!**

The 2004-2005 campaign of the Indianapolis Civil War Round Table is upon us. Now is the time to get your re-enlistment paid. Individual membership is \$25.00 and family membership is \$30.00. Make checks payable to "Indianapolis Civil War Round Table" and mail to Doug Wagner at 5245 Kathcart Way, Indianapolis, IN 46254. If you have any questions, please contact Doug at 328-4828 or e-mail at [dougwag@msn.com](mailto:dougwag@msn.com). A re-enlistment form is provided below. The HARDTACK newsletter will be sent via e-mail to those of you who have an e-mail address. Please be sure to include your e-mail address on your enlistment form.

### **The Indianapolis Civil War Round Table Enlistment for the 2004/2005 Campaign**

Mail to:

D A Wagner  
5245 Kathcart Way  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46254

Phone: 317 328 4828  
Email: [dougwag@msn.com](mailto:dougwag@msn.com)



*Tear off and include with your check:*

.....

### **ICWRT Enlistment for July 2004 thru June 2005**

Make your check payable to "Indianapolis Civil War Round Table"

Name..... Date .....

Address.....  
.....

Phone:..... Email:.....

**Enlistment Status for July 2004 thru June 2005 (please specify):**

**\$25 Individual ..... \$30 Family ..... \$10 Student .....**

In addition to my membership dues, please accept my generous gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
to the ICWRT general operating account (this donation is not tax deductible)