



**Loss of the Sultana and Reminiscences of
Survivors: History of a Disaster Where Over One
Thousand Five Hundred Human Beings Were
Lost, Most of Them ... and Suffering From One to
Twenty-Three M**

Chester D. Berry

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Excerpt from Loss of the Sultana and Reminiscences of Survivors: History of a Disaster Where Over One Thousand Five Hundred Human Beings Were Lost, Most of Them Being Exchanged Prisoners of War on Their Way Home After Privation and Suffering From One to Twenty-Three Months in Cahaba and Andersonville Prisons

The average American is astonished at nothing he sees or hears. He looks for large things. Things ordinary are too tame. This, and the exciting events of April, 1865, perhaps account for the fact that the loss of the steamer "Sultana" and over 1,700 passengers, mostly exchanged prisoners of war, finds no place in American history. The idea that the most appalling marine disaster that ever occurred in the history of the world should pass by unnoticed is strange, but still such is the fact, and the majority of the American people today do not know that there ever was such a vessel as the "Sultana." And many of those who do recollect something about the occurrence cannot tell whether it occurred in the Mississippi river, the gulf of Mexico, or the Atlantic ocean; and the purpose of setting them right and instructing others, thus holding in the memory of the present generation and those yet to be the sufferings of the defenders of our country, is the object of this sketch.

The steamer "Sultana" was built at Cincinnati, Ohio, January, 1863, and was registered, as near as I can learn, at 1,719 tons. She was a regular St. Louis and New Orleans packet, and left the latter port on her fatal trip April 21, 1865, arriving at Vicksburg, Miss., with about two hundred passengers and crew on board.

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