

# Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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## The Sultana

The Sultana  
(Art Thieme)

Come all you young fellows where'er you be.  
Come sit down awhile and listen to me.  
It's of a great riverboat, Sultana her name.  
She's sunk to the bottom and death brought her fame.

It was April 24th of 1865.  
On the Father Of Waters, side-wheelers did glide.  
From New Orleans to St. Louis town,  
Right on her schedule, she glided on down.

Yes, the month it was April, the day 24.  
Brave Union soldiers at Vicksburg did board,  
All sick and pale but happy at last,  
To be out of their prisons and goin' home fast.

They jammed into corners and slept side by side,  
As they talked about home and the warm fireside,  
All bound for Cairo in old Illinois,  
2000 soldiers, some women, and boys.

Now, the old Mississippi had risen so high,  
That o'er the big valley, flood waters did rise.  
Trees and houses adrift in the stream.  
Could be seen only faintly in the dull moonbeams.

She landed at Memphis on April 26th,  
Gave care to the wounded and care to the sick.  
Some stronger soldiers unloaded her hold,  
Carried out canned goods and bodies so cold.

Then all hell broke loose as on they did sail.  
The boilers gave way and their bindings did fail.  
As great an explosion as ever was seen  
Coursed through the night 'mid yells and 'mid screams.

Now, some said the boiler just failed to hold.  
Some said that the rebels torpedoed the coal.  
No true explanation could ever be found,  
And the moans of the 1900 still sound.

This story is true, I swear to you all.

None can deny it, no one at all.

The mighty Mississippi was destined to be

The scene of the greatest disaster at sea.

Cairo: pronounced "Cay-ro." The steamboat Sultana left Vicksburg carrying 2000 Union troops recently released from Confederate prisons, plus 250 civilians and 60 horses and mules. The boat was built for 376 at most. Seven miles above Memphis, the patched boiler exploded and 1900 people perished. That's more people than died on the Titanic.

Tune, "The Rackets We Had On The Blue Mountain Lake,"

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