



Schooner Sultana: Building a Chesapeake Legacy

Drew McMullen, Mr Lucian Niemeyer

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The original schooner Sultana was built in Boston in 1767 and sold to the British navy the next year. She was the smallest schooner ever to serve in the Royal Navy. Used to enforce the tea taxes on the North American coast up to the time of the American Revolution, she visited eleven of the thirteen American colonies and engaged American sailors from Cape Cod to the Chesapeake Bay. Amazingly the logbooks and musterbooks of the voyages have survived to this day and provide one of the most complete histories available for an American-built ship of this period. The book tells the story of the first Sultana in colorful historical chapters, but its primary focus -- in both words and outstanding color photographs -- is the new Sultana, launched in a grand celebration in March of 2001. The reproduction vessel was built under the aegis of Chester River Craft and Art, a nonprofit organization located in the historic port of Chestertown on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The saga of the four-year effort that culminated in the ship's launch involves a rare combination of people, events, and resources; among them are a boatbuilder and restorer who had the vision to initiate the project, a successful entrepreneur and a community leader who together became the driving force behind the fund-raising and administrative efforts, professional boatbuilders who passed up more lucrative jobs to help build Sultana, and hundreds of volunteers and thousands of students who took part in the construction. The end product is a lasting legacy for the Chesapeake Bay region and beyond, a unique floating classroom. The diminutive schooner will be used as an educational tool to allow visitors -- young people especially -- to understand their maritime past better, to experience the primitive conditions under which twenty-five crewmen lived for many months at sea, and to marvel at the skills of the boatbuilders who made the modern Sultana possible.



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