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**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

**Marcey Wright**

marcey.wright@memphistn.gov

Cell: (901) 463-3055

Office: (901) 415-2846

**Stephanie White**

stephanie.white@memphistn.gov

Cell: (901) 827-8013

## **PBS to Feature Memphis Public Library Collection on National Stage July 1**

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (June 26, 2014) – When a 260-foot, wooden steamboat called The Sultana set sail in 1865, the soldiers aboard didn't know their voyage would end with an explosion on the Mississippi River near Memphis. The tragedy claimed the lives of more than 1,800 men – an event later called the “greatest maritime disaster in U.S. history”.

With the help of the Memphis Public Library & Information Center and its historical records, PBS will reconstruct what happened on that day in ***History Detectives Special Investigations: Civil War Sabotage?***, set to air at **8 pm (CST) on Tuesday, July 1, 2014**. Local viewers can watch the show on WKNO/Channel 10.

“Our Library system is not just well regarded locally but nationally and internationally as well. PBS and Lion TV were doing research on a Memphis event, and they came to the Memphis Public Library to do the research,” noted Wayne Dowdy, historian and manager of the History Department at the Benjamin L. Hooks Central Library. “It shows that we have a world class collection.”

During the camera crews' visit to Memphis, they used the Jerry O. Potter Sultana Collection, along with Central Library's newspaper microfilm and official records of the War of the Rebellion. “Not only did we help them with the research,” Dowdy explained, “but we also hosted them for a day as they filmed here. Our TV station WYPL shot video of Central Library's building as well.”

To recreate the 1865 Sultana tragedy, librarians and researchers heavily relied upon the Library's Jerry O. Potter Sultana Collection – a compilation of first-person accounts of the disaster, Memphis' response to it, along with the government's report and subsequent investigation. “PBS and Lion TV reached out to us when they discovered that we had the Potter Collection,” said Dowdy. “They asked for specific information, and we spent a great deal of time gathering information that they used for the finished product.”

*Civil War Sabotage?* is the finished product, which will air July 1. Credit will be given to the Memphis Public Library & Information Center and WYPL for their contributions to the show.

“It is important that Memphians know how well regarded their Library is on a national stage,” Dowdy stressed. “The Memphis Public Library is a nationally-recognized institution, and that speaks volumes!”

For more information about the Memphis Public Library's Jerry O. Potter Sultana Collection or other historical documents, call (901) 415-2742.

**ABOUT *THE MEMPHIS PUBLIC LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CENTER*:**

The *Memphis Public Library and Information Center (MPLIC)* is committed to satisfying the customer's need to know. With 18 Library locations throughout the Greater Memphis area, MPLIC offers an array of programs, services, and resources for residents and visitors to enjoy. They include JobLINC mobile career services, LINC/2-1-1 telephone referral services, a TV and radio station (WYPL TV-18, WYPL FM 89.3), a small business center, laptops for checkout and free Wi-Fi access, in addition to books, e-books, DVDs, records, compact discs, and educational programs for children, teens, and adults. Customers can find age-appropriate services and a list of Library locations at [www.memphislibrary.org](http://www.memphislibrary.org).

Memphis Public Libraries are publicly and privately funded. Approximately three million people visit the *Memphis Public Library and Information Center* each year.

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