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War Comes to the Mississippi Delta: The Sesquicentennial of the Battle of Fort Pemberton

(Greenwood, MS) The Museum of the Mississippi Delta commemorates the sesquicentennial of the Civil War in the Delta with the exhibition *War Comes to the Mississippi Delta*, opening January 26, 2013 and running through August 31, 2013.

The exhibition tells the story of the Union forces' attempt to navigate the intricate rivers of the Mississippi Delta during the winter of 1863. Known as the Yazoo Pass Expedition, the attempt ultimately ended in failure, as Confederate forces held strong at a hastily built outpost near Greenwood known as Fort Pemberton.

The most noted aspect of the Confederate defenses was the ocean steamer *Star of the West*, originally a Union transport ship, listed as the first ship fired upon during the Civil War at Fort Sumter. After being captured by Rebel forces, the ship met her demise when it was sunk next to Fort Pemberton to block the passage of Union ships through the channel as they headed toward their destination: Vicksburg.

The Museum will display Civil War artifacts from its collection including a partial steering wheel from the *Star of West*, The *Lady Polk*, a cannon used in the Battle of Fort Pemberton, is on permanent view at the Museum. There are only 17 examples of the Civil War-era cannon left in existence today, and the *Lady Polk* is the only one that has been restored for firing. Vicksburg National Military Park will loan items recovered from the Union ironclad. *U.S.S. Cairo*.

Stellar examples of period clothing including a butternut officer's frock worn by Cpt. T. Otis Baker is on loan from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, along with an officer's sword, muzzle-loading pistol, a British import carbine and a forage cap worn by Maj. Gen. William Walthall. A rare 1860s homespun dress will help tell the story of women on the home front.

The exhibition opens January 26th in a special free event which includes portrayals of General Ulysses S. Grant, Confederate and Union re-enactors and period music.

The exhibition is funded in part by grants received from the Mississippi Humanities Council and the Greenwood Convention and Visitors Bureau. Additional funds have been provided by Staplcoth, Wade, Inc. and several local companies, as well as private contributions.

The Museum of the Mississippi Delta was founded in 1969 as Cottonlandia Museum. The collection consists of historical items related to the cotton industry, agriculture and military history (with emphasis on the Civil War), a regional art collection and the largest collection of Spanish Colonial trade beads in the Southeast. The Native America Gallery houses the most extensive collection in the country of Avenue Polychrome vessels dating back to 15th century.

Museum of the Mississippi Delta

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Hours: Mon-Friday 9:00-5:00
Saturday 10:00-4:00

Admission Charged
Tour groups welcome
Guided tours available
Closed Major Holidays and Sundays