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WWI SYMPOSIUM EXAMINES FORGOTTEN AND OVERLOOKED ASPECTS OF NORTH CAROLINA'S ROLE IN THE GREAT WAR, 100 YEARS LATER

CHARLOTTE, N.C., Sept. 13, 2017 – How much do you know about North Carolina's role in World War I? Can you detail the contributions of African American soldiers? Have you heard of the German internment camp built in the mountains of North Carolina? Have you visited the site of Camp Greene, the WWI military camp that trained 100,000 soldiers just west of uptown Charlotte?

On Sunday, Nov. 12, The Charlotte Museum of History hosts "**Exploring North Carolina's Role in The Great War: 100 Years On,**" a symposium to discuss these forgotten, overlooked and untold stories of North Carolina's WWI history. The half-day program features four speakers, a documentary screening and the chance to explore artifacts of the period.

"2017 is the 100-year anniversary of the U.S. entering World War I," said Mary Newsom, chair of the board of trustees of The Charlotte Museum of History. "This so-called Great War had immensely powerful repercussions around the globe, including in Charlotte and North Carolina. This important forum and its speakers will share stories from North Carolina about racial injustice, economic opportunity and much more, looking at how these issues were perceived a hundred years ago, and how we still feel their effects today."

The roster of symposium speakers includes:

- Screenwriter and film producer Jack Dillard. Dillard screens and discusses his documentary "**City of Canvas: The Story of Camp Greene,**" produced in

collaboration with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and WTVI Charlotte. Charlotte was selected as the site of one of 32 training camps to prepare U.S. troops for war in France. Camp Greene was built in 90 days on 2,400 acres near uptown Charlotte and later expanded to nearly 6,000 acres. More than 100,000 soldiers from across the country received training at the camp in 1917 and 1918.

- Dr. Janet Hudson, associate professor of history at the University of South Carolina's Extended University, presents "**Black Soldiers Matter: Carolina's Unheralded Soldiers of WWI.**" Hudson shares the largely overlooked WWI experiences of the nearly 22,000 African-American soldiers from North Carolina, including how President Woodrow Wilson's War Department altered its military mobilization and training plans to accommodate the demands of white southern political leaders. Hudson is author of the prize-winning book, *Entangled by White Supremacy: Reform in World War I-era South Carolina*.
- Dr. Heather Perry, associate professor of history at UNC Charlotte, will present "**Appalachia in the Trenches: German Prisoners in Our Backyard,**" revealing the largely forgotten details of a German internment camp in Hot Springs, N.C. Amid waves of anti-German hysteria and spy mania, the federal government rounded up 2,200 newly labeled German "enemy aliens" and relocated them to a hastily constructed camp at Hot Springs, in the Pisgah National Forest of western North Carolina. There these civilians were imprisoned for some 18 months, by turns charming and alienating the local residents. Perry examines the social, economic and political repercussions of the camp and demonstrates how global events affected the daily lives of an isolated mountain community. Perry is the associate editor of the *Journal of First World War Studies*, and her most recent book is *Recycling the Disabled: Army, Medicine, and Modernity in WWI Germany*.
- Dr. Mark Wilson, professor of history at UNC Charlotte, presents "**World War I and Charlotte's Economic Development.**" Wilson explores the long-term economic and demographic impacts of WWI and Camp Greene on the Charlotte region. Wilson digs into the personal experiences of people who worked in the textile industry and other businesses that supported the war effort. His book,

Destructive Creation: American Business and the Winning of World War II, won the Hagley Prize for best book in business history. He also is co-recipient of the Gomory Prize book award.

Symposium attendees can enjoy a reception following the symposium and displays of WWI artifacts from the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library's Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room, UNC Charlotte's J. Murrey Atkins Library, the American Red Cross and Dirk Allman "The Doughboy," an independent WWI memorabilia collector.

"Exploring North Carolina's Role in The Great War: 100 Years On" is part of a partnership with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and UNC Charlotte that includes a year-long series of free lectures and film screenings about the Great War. Upcoming lectures in the series include:

- **"Over There: The United States Enters World War I,"** presented by Dr. Steve Sabol of UNC Charlotte's Department of History, on Sept. 21, 2017 at The Charlotte Museum of History.
- **"Great Britain and the Great War,"** a lecture by Dr. Peter Thorsheim of UNC Charlotte's History Department, on Oct. 12, 2017 at The Charlotte Museum of History.
- **"Mobilizing the Kitchen: Women, Food and the WWI Homefront,"** by UNC Charlotte's Dr. Heather Perry, on Nov. 9, 2017 at The Charlotte Museum of History.
- The Main Library screens these films about WWI at its Francis Auditorium:
 - "Joyeux Noel" on Dec. 2, 2017.
 - "Wings" on Jan. 27, 2018.

How to Go

The **"Exploring North Carolina's Role in The Great War: 100 Years On"** symposium takes place on Sunday, Nov. 12, at The Charlotte Museum of History at 3500 Shamrock Drive. Doors open at noon; symposium begins at 12:30. Tickets and registration are at



charlottemuseum.org under the [Events tab](#). Tickets are \$20 for museum members and \$25 for the general public. The museum offers a special rate of \$5 for students and teachers. For more information or reservations for the fall lecture series and winter film screenings, call the Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library at 704-416-0150.

About The Charlotte Museum of History

The Charlotte Museum of History engages a broad audience in the history of the Charlotte region through the stories of its people, places and events to promote dialogue and historical perspective. The museum is the steward of the Hezekiah Alexander House (ca. 1774) and home site, a site listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the oldest existing home in Mecklenburg County. For more information, visit charlottemuseum.org or follow the museum on Facebook and Twitter (@CLThistory).

About Charlotte Mecklenburg Library

The Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is one of America's leading urban public libraries, serving a community of more than one million citizens in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Through 20 locations, targeted outreach and online, the Library delivers exceptional services and programs, with a mission to improve lives and build a stronger community. For more, visit cmlibrary.org.

UNC Charlotte Department of History

The Department of History is housed in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, the largest college at the state's urban research university. The department offers students a range of courses that explore history from the ancient world to the present day in geographical settings that span the globe. Its programs of study develop the crucial analytical and communications skills needed for success in a wide range of careers. The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences advances the discovery, dissemination, and application of knowledge and creativity, educating students to be critical and imaginative thinkers and engaged citizens for a world increasingly characterized by diversity and change.

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