

“All War Arrangements are but Schools in Patience”:
The North Carolina Council of Defense and the Associational State, 1917-1919

by

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Department of
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the creation, structure, activities, and impact of the North Carolina Council of Defense during the First World War. Its story, while particular to a single state and its people, also illuminates and explains the dynamic and compelling regional and national events that drove a massive wartime mobilization. The North Carolina Council of Defense is also an entry point into understanding the decisions and pathways seen in the American mobilization, helping to illuminate how and why the mobilization occurred in the ways that it did. Perhaps most importantly, the story of this state Council provides insight into the nature of American governance during wartime. Positioned between the national government and the people of North Carolina, the Council mediated the activities of public, private, and individual efforts in support of mobilization activities. Because of this intermediary positioning, it was instrumental in expanding state capacity and capability for military and resource mobilization, and therefore supporting an increase in the nation's ability to mobilize for the war. However, the Council's intermediary role also allowed those managing the state mobilization to prevent any significant challenge to the state's white supremacist and patriarchal socio-political system, despite the dynamic changes wrought by the need to mobilize the nation for war.

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Acknowledgements

“We are a nation of paradoxes, impulses, and inconsistencies. Often times when we appear weakest we are strongest,” wrote Colonel John Dallas Langston, a North Carolinian lawyer, and preeminent staff officer of the Selective Service System.¹ Much like the United States in the First World War, the same might be said of my journey to complete this dissertation. Impulsive, inconsistent, and at times weak, I struggled to comprehend theories and methodologies, formulate a dissertation topic, conduct the research, and most of all, write. Doing most of my PhD work during a global pandemic did not help. However, in my weakness, I was provided vast stores of strength through the kindness, generosity, and brilliance of my advisor, my professors (particularly my dissertation committee members), my peers, numerous librarians and archivists, and my patient, understanding, and loving partner and daughters. While I do not have the capacity to thank everyone that made this dissertation possible, I can certainly try and repay a few debts by acknowledging their contributions.

I must lay my most profound thanks at the feet of Jennifer, my best friend, emotional foundation, and partner in every sense of the word. My world would not turn without your support and love. I also thank my wonderful and patient daughters, Cailin and Mckenna. On too many days over the past few years, my office door was closed, or I was at an archive conducting research. I fully recognize your sacrifice in giving me the space I needed to get this done so quickly. Great thanks are also due to my parents, Dave and LeAnn Finney, and my in-laws, Rick and Denise Kastigar – they have made me the man I am today and have supported me in all my various adventures.

¹ John Dallas Langston, “Psychology of the Draft,” page 6, Box 2, John Dallas Langston Papers, 1842-1969, Rubenstein Library Special Collections, Duke University, Durham, N.C. (hereafter Langston Papers).

I would not have completed this dissertation, or the entire PhD program, without the guidance, advice, and support of my advisor, Dirk Bönker. His ability to channel my enthusiasm upon my arrival at Duke and lay before me fruitful paths of learning and growth was truly a wonder to behold. More importantly, his generosity of time and attention – to say nothing of his intellect – were unending. When COVID closed archives and prevented travel at the exact moment I needed to begin research in the summer of 2020, Dirk spent every other week on Zoom helping me reconceive my dissertation project into something that could be accomplished on my accelerated timeline during a pandemic. This dissertation simply would not exist without the dedication and support of you, Dirk. Thank you.

I also thank committee members Nancy MacLean, Adriane Lentz-Smith, Simon Miles, and Christopher Capozzola. Your advice, support, and most especially your unique talents and perspectives, both personal and professional, shaped this project and my own development as a scholar and human being. Maria LaMonaca Wisdom was instrumental in helping me through multiple transition periods while here at Duke – I cannot thank you enough for your coaching and mentorship. I am also thankful for the many peers and friends who helped me through coursework and provided comment during writing and chapter review groups, particularly Becka Beard, L.J. Brandli, Artie Braswell, Cris Culton, Nova Déjardin, Cameron Givens, Reina Henderson, Yooseong Heo, Lesa Redmond, Roz Rothwell, Sam Schmidt, Jessica Hauger Borsellino, Allison Raven, Robert Williams, Meghan Woolley, and Kelsey Zavelo.

I am forever indebted to the scores of librarians, archivists, and friends across North Carolina and the United States who shared their expertise and provided guidance regarding research. In particular, I would like to thank Carson Holloway, Kelley Lawton, Matthew Peek, Jon Klug, Jim Bissett, Nancy Manning, Elise Allison, Sheila Bumgarner, Travis Souther, Alison Dineen, Julie Wiker, Jennifer Daugherty, Belle Long, Ainsley Powell, John Dubuisson, Dennis

Wilson, John Gartrell, and Chaitra Powell. Huge thanks to Bill Breen, who shared primary source documents on the Council of National Defense, shipping them all the way from Australia.

Chapter 4 would not be as cohesive or thoughtful without the guidance and advice of Laura Edwards, as well as the reviewers and editors of *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, in which a version of the chapter will be published.

Finally, I thank Robert Davis and the Army's Goodpaster Scholars program (also known as the Advanced Strategic Planning and Policy Program, or ASP3) for selecting me to attend a PhD program and funding it throughout my studies. I would not have been able to carve out the time in my career without your support.

Introduction:

“The Official War Emergency Organization in your State”: North Carolina and Mobilization in the First World War¹

“The state council of defense was created to secure mass action on a national scale” wrote Joseph Hyde Pratt, the founder and post-war historian of the North Carolina Council of Defense.² Capturing the purpose of this organization in the vast national mobilization of the United States for the First World War, he went on to say, occurred by “apportioning the war work amongst the people of the state and thus securing organized effort.” The state Council “would mould [sic] and unite the people of the state into a union that would cooperate in every way with each other to further the interest of this country in the war.”³

From a national perspective, the history of the North Carolina Council of Defense, operating from May 1917 until February 1919, provides insight into America’s struggle to create a wartime centralized state in the early twentieth century. The United States entered the First World War on 6 April 1917 by declaring war on the Imperial German Government and associating its forces with the British and French, both ravaged militarily and domestically by three previous years of war. On the brink of collapse, the Allied war effort required money, food, munitions, and most of all, men. To generate these resources and deploy them across the Atlantic Ocean for employment in France, the United States government cobbled together a mobilization apparatus that evolved throughout the war. The emergency nature of the operation and ad hoc approach resulted in a confused network of federal agencies, state organizations, and private

¹ U.S. Council of National Defense to State Councils of Defense, General Letter No. 117, 24 Jul 1918, Folder 7, Box 13, WWI 1, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C. (WWI 1).

² Joseph Hyde Pratt, notes for the unpublished “History of the North Carolina Council of Defense,” Folder 4, Box 1, WWI 1.

³ Ibid.

associations that interacted at first through voluntary cooperation, then through a combination of cooperation and coercion. By the end of the war, every state and territory in the United States – including North Carolina – created some version of a Council of Defense as an element of this national mobilization apparatus.⁴ These organizations communicated horizontally with other state-level organizations and vertically to the Council of National Defense to share approaches and, at times, pressure the federal government to provide the states with the tools they needed for mobilization. The loose, decentralized nature of the Council of Defense System mirrored the general pattern of all the relationships created to manage the number of mobilization tasks that were, in the words of Secretary of War Newton Baker, “so large that no language is adequate to describe the extent of the work.”⁵

The North Carolina Council of Defense must also be viewed as part of regional, state, and local history. By looking at the mobilization in more granular detail, the influence of local and state-level actors on national policies and outcomes becomes apparent. Charged with executing the mobilization activities needed by the national government to conduct the war, state and local leaders impacted the course of wartime preparations through a calibrated mixture of support and pushback. Within their state borders, these Councils worked to generate support from their fellow citizens and increase the capability of the state to provide the resources the nation needed for war. However, the members of the Council also acted on their own state and personal interests and preferences, sometimes conflicting with the desires of Washington, resulting in an evolving negotiation between the federal government, the state Councils, and the citizens needed to support wartime activities.

⁴ U.S. Council of National Defense, Memorandum dated 5 May 1917, Record Group 62, Microfilm Roll M-1069, National Archives, College Park, M.D. (NARA); Rexford L. Holmes and the U.S. Council of National Defense, “National Defense Conference Held Under the Auspices of the Council of National Defense, May 2 and 3, 1917,” Transcript of Proceedings, Washington, D.C., 1917, Record Group 62, 17-B.2, Box 1095, NARA; Joseph Hyde Pratt, “History of the North Carolina Council of Defense,” Volume 1, unpublished, circa 1932, Folder 1, Box 1, WWI 1.

⁵ Holmes, “National Defense Conference,” 5.

This dissertation offers a history of the North Carolina Council of Defense during the First World War. In exploring the creation, structure, activities, and legacy of this council, it offers a new analysis of the American mobilization for war through the lens of state and local history. By exploring the North Carolina Council of Defense, I make four arguments that expand our understanding of mobilization for war in 1917-18 and the nature of American governance in the early twentieth century. First, the formation of the Council of Defense System, including the North Carolina Council of Defense, was organized based upon the underlying dynamics of the associational state. As historian Brian Balogh has argued, the defining characteristic of this state was the delegation of authority to “a politically palatable mix of intermediary institutions” that can “adapt public policy prescriptions to prevailing conceptions of the proper balance between collective ends and individual opportunity.”⁶ In the First World War, the North Carolina Council of Defense served as such an intermediary institution managing the public, private, and individual efforts for mobilization in the state.

Second, I argue that while the mobilization for the First World War was driven by national requirements and resulted in the extension of federal power, state and local elites exerted significant influence and control over events on the ground. The preferences and perceived benefits of the men leading the state Council of Defense dictated where and how federal and state capabilities increased, as well as in what areas the state refused to cede power to the federal government.

Third, the wartime associational state engaged in a particular politics of inclusion and exclusion, dictating who could participate in mobilization and where they would be allowed to do so. This was seen nationally and regionally. In North Carolina, the politics of inclusion and

⁶ Brian Balogh, *The Associational State: American Governance in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia, P.A.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 5, 11, 31-32. The underlying logic and definitions pertinent to the associational state will be developed in detail later in the introduction.

exclusion was most evident in the realms of class, gender, and race, reflecting the key tenets of southern Progressivism and the broader imperatives of a patriarchal, white-supremacist socio-political order in the state.

Finally, I argue that the North Carolina Council of Defense was successful in its purpose as defined by the state's elites: it enabled the state to support the nation for war and it prevented any challenges to the extant hierarchies of power in the state. In the areas the Council supported – such as military mobilization and resource management – it increased the reach of the federal government by expanding its infrastructural power down to the local level.⁷ In the areas the Council wished to prevent federal intrusion – namely the inclusion of women and African Americans – it contested federal desires or shaped them to reduce the possible threat to the state's governing order.

This dissertation expands current understanding of American mobilization for the First World War. By presenting the North Carolina Council of Defense as an embodiment of the American associational state, I not only direct attention to the centrality of both the state and public-private partnership to the mobilization for war, but I also demonstrate how the very diffusion of authority allowed for a massive expansion of the infrastructural power of the United States.

My analysis intersects with three broad historiographical fields. First, I engage critically with literature that focuses on national level centralization at the heart of the mobilization of the United States for the First World War. Second, I expand on the literature on the socio-political milieu of the American South and southern Progressivism at the turn of the twentieth century to understand the context of the war in North Carolina. And third, I draw key insights from recent

⁷ Infrastructural power comes from Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, vol. 3 (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 12-13. This concept, discussed later, describes the capacity of a state to penetrate civil society with its policies outside of its direct control, gathering national strength through decentralization.

literature on U.S. state formation and American Political Development to make sense of American wartime governance.

The United States and the First World War

U.S. participation in the First World War marks a turning point in the history of the nation. This period, while short, was dramatic in its impact on the country. A national Progressive reform agenda reached its apogee, destroying itself through its own overreach during the wartime mobilization.⁸ Industrialization and urbanization begun decades before accelerated to contend with a booming wartime economy. And an institutionally fragmented American national state took tentative steps toward increasing power – most dramatically through a vast wartime conscription of young men for military service – while also bowing to the pressures of a staunchly supported ideal of federalism by most American citizens.⁹

Undoubtedly, America's participation in the First World War is about the United States as a nation, with a foreign policy enacted "Over There" at the bayonet points of a vast army.

However, war is more than presidents and generals, soldiers and battle. This is particularly true of

⁸ On Progressivism and the war, see: Douglas B. Craig, *Progressives at War: William G. McAdoo and Newton D. Baker, 1863-1941* (Baltimore, M.D.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013); Lee A. Craig, *Josephus Daniels: His Life & Times* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Kimberley S. Johnson, *Governing the American State: Congress and the New Federalism, 1877-1929* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007); Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2003); and Eldon J. Eisenach, *The Lost Promise of Progressivism* (Lawrence, K.S.: University Press of Kansas, 1994).

⁹ On preparedness and conscription, see: John Whiteclay Chambers, *To Raise an Army: The Draft Comes to Modern America* (New York, N.Y.: Free Press, 1987); John Patrick Finnegan, *Against the Specter of a Dragon: The Campaign for American Military Preparedness, 1914-1917* (Westport, C.T.: Greenwood Press, 1974).

On federal centralization for mobilization see: Paul A.C. Koistinen, *Mobilizing for Modern War: The Political Economy of American Warfare, 1865-1919* (Lawrence, K.S.: University Press of Kansas, 1997); Ronald Schaffer, *America in the Great War: The Rise of the War Welfare State* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1991); Robert D. Cuff, *The War Industries Board: Business-Government Relations during World War I* (Baltimore, M.D.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York, N.Y.: Hill and Wang, 1967); Benedict Crowell and Robert Forrest Wilson, *The Giant Hand: Our Mobilization and Control of Industry and Natural Resources 1917-1918*, vol. 1 (New Haven, C.T.: Yale University Press, 1921).

the First World War, which required a comprehensive mobilization of over 100 million citizens, including 4 million of whom would serve in uniform. Upon its entry into the conflict in 1917, the United States had to create, adapt, and expand a national war machine that employed every part of the nation and generated as many resources as possible. In short, America had to build a warfare state.¹⁰ The national centralization that such a warfare state required is ably covered by historians, sociologists, and political scientists.¹¹ However, in the governance system of the United States, particularly in the early twentieth century, the expansion of the capabilities of the national state was dependent on decentralization, the need for broad public support, and the use of coercion.

Focusing on the regional and local dimension of the wartime mobilization and the dependence on non-state actors, my dissertation eschews previous military-centric and centralization theses and instead studies the warfare state through the different levels of civilian actors – in and out of government – and their motivations. As historian David Kennedy has argued, mobilization at the national level required accommodation of state and local governments and even individual actors in the private sector, resulting in a “curious apparatus” that led to

¹⁰ For more on the concept of a warfare state, see: James T. Sparrow, *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2013); Marc Allen Eisner, *From Warfare State to Welfare State: World War I, Compensatory State-Building, and the Limits of the Modern Order* (University Park, P.A.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000); Michael S. Sherry, *The Rise of American Air Power: The Creation of Armageddon* (New Haven, C.T.: Yale University Press, 1987).

¹¹ Richard Shawn Faulkner, *The School of Hard Knocks: Combat Leadership in the American Expeditionary Forces* (College Station, T.X.: Texas A&M University Press, 2012); Mark E. Grotelueschen, *The AEF Way of War: The American Army and Combat in World War I* (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Eisner, *From Warfare State to Welfare State*; Gary Mead, *The Doughboys: America and the First World War* (New York, N.Y.: Overlook Books, 2000); Koistinen, *Mobilizing for Modern War*; Ellis W. Hawley, *The Great War and the Search for Modern Order* (Prospect Heights, I.L.: Waveland Press, Inc., 1992); Edward M. Coffman, *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I* (Madison, W.I.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986); David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1982); Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Cuff, *The War Industries Board*; James Weinstein, *The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State: 1900-1918* (Boston, M.A.: Beacon Press, 1971); Daniel R. Beaver, *Newton D. Baker and the American War Effort 1917-1919* (Lincoln, N.E.: University of Nebraska Press, 1966).

lasting ambiguity and continual negotiation through and outside of formal governance mechanisms.¹² Such a system was ultimately effective not because of their “bureaucratic efficiency...but an ability to reach deeply into the population and to involve large numbers of people,”¹³ in the words of William Breen, a historian of the Council of National Defense. To obtain the men and material needed for the war, regional, state, and local mechanisms were required to engage the people in mobilization activities, tying them to the state level organization to achieve the overall requirements of the nation. It is my contention that the bulk of the organizing and direction of individual citizens and organized groups for the mobilization of the First World War occurred at this state level.

An analysis of wartime mobilization in the United States requires a close look at the motivations and pressures driving wartime work by American men and women. Here my research draws heavily on previous literature on the importance of self-activation, escalating social pressure, and later in the war, the shift to more coercive methods to generate the required capacity and capability for a national mobilization. Perhaps most importantly, Christopher Capozzola has explored the evolving dynamics of citizens’ obligations to the state, and the state to its citizens, during the war. Over time, voluntary and positive approaches toward popular mobilization gave way to coercive expressions of government and civic fervor, seen most dramatically in vigilance organizations that actively policed and enforced public loyalty, sometimes to the point of vigilantism. As society, aided by federal and state governments, became more restrictive in accepted forms of service, Americans increasingly began legally challenging state overreach, and, in the process, created a rights-based vision of citizenship, instead of an obligation-based model

¹² Kennedy, *Over Here*, 137.

¹³ William J. Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home: Civilian Mobilization, Wartime Federalism, and the Council of National Defense, 1917-1919* (Westport, C.T.: Greenwood Press, 1984), xiii.

built on voluntary support to the state.¹⁴ Similarly, Jennifer Keene and Jeanette Keith have examined the impact individuals and their choices had in terms of conscripted military service, or in their resistance to being drafted. Like Capozzola, they have drawn attention to the way in which the politics of obligation, citizenship, and loyalty shifted through the war, shaping society, its institutions, and the social contract between the American government and its citizens through the wartime mobilization.¹⁵ My dissertation takes these concepts of motivation, social pressure, citizenship, obligation, and loyalty and applies them to the creation of structures that generated mobilization capability at the state level, as well as mitigated possible threats to social and political hierarchies of power in the dynamic period of war.

The South, Southern Progressivism, and North Carolina

Location, local social and political structures, and regional cultures impact the motivation, obligation, and the service of individuals in wartime. These aspects also shape the creation and form of the infrastructure that organize and drive the mobilization for war. As Joseph H. Fry aptly noted, “*Place* matters in how Americans have responded to and influenced the formation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy.”¹⁶ The same can be said about the effect of location – local and regional, conceptual and geographic – on domestic and military policy, even

¹⁴ Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2008). Capozzola also discusses elements of the associational state in his work when addressing the use of organized society by the state, as well as organized society’s use of the state, in a shift toward more coercive methods of mobilization during the war.

¹⁵ Jennifer D. Keene, *Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America* (Baltimore, M.D.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); Jeanette Keith, *Rich Man’s War, Poor Man’s Fight: Race, Class, and Power in the Rural South during the First World War* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

¹⁶ Joseph A. Fry, “Place Matters: Domestic Regionalism and the Formation of American Foreign Policy,” *Diplomatic History* 36, No. 3 (June 2012): 452. Emphasis in the original. Fry develops the idea of the South as a region – culturally and politically – shaping foreign policy in more detail in his book *Dixie Looks Abroad: The South and U.S. Foreign Relations, 1789-1973* (Baton Rouge, L.A.: Louisiana State University Press, 2002).

as the reasons for how and why are bound to change over time.¹⁷ For the mobilization of North Carolina in 1917-18, the history of the South, which is rooted in slavery, aristocracy, white-supremacy, and patriarchy, was also shaped by more recent ideas of economic and educational Progressivism.¹⁸ Understanding these underlying socio-political dynamics provides the context required to understand the late-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century South, as well as specifically the state of North Carolina, and how they impacted the design and results of wartime mobilization.

My work draws from the literature on southern Progressivism and the workings of white supremacy and patriarchy, which were at the heart of North Carolina's socio-political order. In doing so, I identify a particular politics of inclusion and exclusion that allowed state leaders in North Carolina to generate the support needed for wartime mobilization, while preventing any dramatic or lasting change to the social and political system.¹⁹ This politics of inclusion and

¹⁷ Laura F. Edwards, "What Constitutes a Region?" *Diplomatic History* 36, No. 3 (June 2012): 485-486.

¹⁸ For the history of North Carolina, see: Larry E. Tise and Jeffrey J. Crow, eds., *New Voyages to Carolina: Reinterpreting North Carolina History* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017); William A. Link, *North Carolina: Change and Tradition in a Southern State* (Wheeling, I.L.: Harlan-Davidson Press, 2009); Pamela Grundy, *A Journey Through North Carolina* (Salt Lake City, U.T.: Gibbs Smith Publisher, 2008); Milton Ready, *The Tar Heel State: A History of North Carolina* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2005); and Jack D. Fleer, *North Carolina Government and Politics* (Lincoln, N.E.: University of Nebraska Press, 1994). For southern Progressivism, see: Abigail Modaff, "To 'Meet Life Face to Face': Communication and American Social Reform from Haymarket to the Harlem Renaissance," diss. (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University, 2021); Laura R. Fisher, *Reading for Reform: The Social Work of Literature in the Progressive Era* (Minneapolis, M.N.: University of Minnesota Press, 2019); Michael Perman, *Pursuit of Unity: A Political History of the American South* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Laura M. Westhoff, *A Fatal Drifting Apart: Democratic Social Knowledge and Chicago Reform, Urban Life and Urban Landscape Series* (Columbus, O.H.: Ohio State University Press, 2007); Stephen David Kantrowitz, *Ben Tillman & the Reconstruction of White Supremacy* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); William A. Link, in *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); J. Morgan Kousser, *The Shaping of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and the Establishment of the One-Party South, 1880-1910* (New Haven, C.T.: Yale University Press, 1974); Jack Temple Kirby, *Darkness at the Dawn: Race and Reform in the Progressive South* (Philadelphia, P.A.: Lippincott, 1972); C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge, L.A.: Louisiana State University Press, 1951); and V.O. Key Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York, N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949).

¹⁹ Lynn Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense: American Women and World War I* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Adriane Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 2011); Chad Louis Williams, *Torchbearers*

exclusion was both built into Progressivism itself and shaped by the violent socio-political environment created by white supremacists in the South during and after Reconstruction.²⁰

Despite the authoritarian and violent socio-political order in North Carolina, African Americans and women were able to work within and around the system to support and shape mobilization and the war effort more broadly. As the politics and requirements shifted with the currents of the war, those disadvantaged by the pre-war order were able to adapt. Here Gilmore's work on Black women's groups in the South has been instrumental to my own analysis of the ways in which inclusion of women coincided with exclusion of African Americans. Her analysis of the ability of African American women to carry forward Black political life and support their communities and the war effort, despite political disenfranchisement and control over their economic opportunities, is a foundational example of the intersection of southern politics, race, and gender.²¹ Understanding the regional and local history of North Carolina adds granularity and complexity to the history of the conflict, expanding previous treatments focused on national centralization. It also sheds light into the evolving politics and governance structures of the American state in the early twentieth century.

American Political Development and State-Building

The development of a warfare state and the structures needed for wartime mobilization in 1917-1918 were wholly dependent on the political practices, rules, relationships, leaders, and

of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Kimberly Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War* (Urbana, I.L.: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

²⁰ McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent*; Kantrowitz, *Ben Tillman*.

²¹ Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

ideas existing when the United States entered the war.²² Recent literature, broadly conceived as American Political Development, assesses the American state's complexity and constituent parts, the dynamics of political parties, the mechanisms of institutional change, the variability yet strength of public policy, the uneven process of democratization and inclusion in full rights of citizenship, questions of how race shapes political institutions, and the importance of business-government relations.²³ Essentially, this area of study searches for the location, dynamics, and boundaries of "the state." This line of inquiry, though broadly focused on state formation in the United States from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries, can provide insights into wartime state building to make sense of how the comparatively decentralized and allegedly "weak"

²² The basis of political development analysis includes the impact of the context in which it takes place, Karren Orren and Stephen Skowronek, *The Search for American Political Development* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 20.

²³ The literature for American Political Development, as employed in this dissertation, spans from corporate liberalism to political and business history, and historical institutionalism to the study of governance. Such works include Martin J. Sklar, *The Corporate Reconstruction of American Capitalism, 1890-1916: The Market, the Law, and Politics* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1988) and "Woodrow Wilson and the Political Economy of Modern United States Liberalism," *Studies on the Left* 1, no. 3 (Fall 1960): 25-26; Gabriel Kolko, *Main Currents in Modern American History* (New York, N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1976) and *Railroads and Regulation, 1877-1916* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965); Weinstein, *The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State*; Valerie Jean Conner, *The National War Labor Board: Stability, Social Justice, and the Voluntary State in World War I* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1983); Cuff, *The War Industries Board*; Kevin Butterfield, *The Making of Tocqueville's America: Law and Association in the Early United States* (Chicago, I.L.: University of Chicago Press, 2015); Theda Skocpol, *Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life* (Norman, O.K.: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003); Daniel P. Carpenter, *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862-1928* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001); Jocelyn Elise Crowley and Theda Skocpol, "The Rush to Organize: Explaining Associational Formation in the United States, 1860s-1920s," *American Journal of Political Science* 45, no. 4 (2001): 813-829; Eldon Eisenach, "Liberal Citizenship and American National Identity," *Studies in American Political Development* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 198-215; Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, M.A.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998); Ellis W. Hawley, *The New Deal and the Problem of Monopoly: A Study in Economic Ambivalence* (New York, N.Y.: Fordham University Press, 1995) and *The Great War and the Search for Modern Order*; Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, M.A.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992); Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Alfred D. Chandler Jr., *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge, M.A.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1977).

American state rose to the challenge of war and created mechanisms for a successful mobilization in the First World War.

Specifically, I draw on recent work detailing the importance of federalism, the infrastructural strength of the American state, and the associational character of American governance. First, federalism is central to the U.S. system of governance and the American state. Enshrined in the Constitution, federalism placed the preponderance of political and governance power in individual states, only allocating such trans-border issues as commerce and foreign invasion to the national government. The federal structure of authority drove behavior and political power in the United States from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth century and beyond. As Gary Gerstle has demonstrated, the states wielded far more domestic authority in the American system from the late nineteenth century up to the First World War because they had the power to coerce through force, a tool unavailable to the post-Reconstruction federal government. Instead, the federal government had to enforce its power through the rule of law and its ability to act as an example. This disparity, between a broad police power on the one hand and persuasion toward a common good on the other, privileges state behavior in Americans' everyday lives over that of the federal government.²⁴

In turn, this system of federalism required the national state to encourage and integrate the authority provided through diffuse governance mechanisms – from laws and regulations to local adherence to the communal public welfare, the funding and authority provided to non-governmental organizations in civil society, and the impact of the civic activism by citizens outside of government. The integration of these elements by formal government structures increases their ability to generate resources and public support through what Michael Mann has

²⁴ Gary Gerstle, *Liberty and Coercion: The Paradox of American Government from the Founding to the Present* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2015).

termed “infrastructural power.”²⁵ William Novak built on Mann by attacking the myth of a less-regimented American “weak” state.²⁶ According to Novak, where European states relied on centralization and bureaucratization, the American structure of governance created diffuse processes and mechanisms to increase its infrastructural power by placing greater resources and authority into private and intermediary hands. Such diffusion of authority did not lessen the power of the American state. Instead, it allowed for greater penetration into American society and an impact on “the everyday substructure of modern social and economic organization,” particularly on the periphery of the federal state.²⁷

Finally, my work draws heavily on the “associational synthesis” developed most prominently by Brian Balogh.²⁸ This approach focuses on political behavior, interest group bargaining, and the intersection of the public and private sectors to explain American governance. In line with this approach, I present the American warfare state as an emanation of an existing “associational order,” which incorporated elements of formal government, private enterprise, and interest group politics to manage national and local state functions, from governance to social services. A large portion of the American people during the First World War can be categorized as “unorganized society,” or individuals with limited to no direct ties or activity in the civic institutions, interest groups, or the government of this associational order. However, the Progressive Era was rife with private organizations, associations, and interest groups that did pull

²⁵ Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, 13.

²⁶ William J. Novak, “The Myth of the ‘Weak’ American State,” *American Historical Review* 113, no. 3 (June 2008): 752-772 and *The People’s Welfare: Law and Regulation in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

²⁷ Novak, “The Myth of the ‘Weak’ American State,” 764, 767.

²⁸ Elisabeth Stephanie Clemens, *Civic Gifts: Voluntarism and the Making of the American Nation-State* (Chicago, I.L.: University of Chicago Press, 2020) and *The People’s Lobby: Organizational Innovation and the Rise of Interest Group Politics in the United States, 1890-1925* (Chicago, I.L.: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Balogh, *The Associational State and A Government Out of Sight: The Mystery of National Authority in Nineteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Julia Irwin, *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation’s Humanitarian Awakening* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2013).

together many Americans – mostly middle- and upper-class individuals – into what I describe as “organized society.” Where individuals from unorganized society were necessary in mobilizing the nation for war, organized society was crucial for forming, staffing, planning, directing, cajoling, and coercing support for all mobilization activities. Unorganized and organized elements of society were tied into formal government institutions and processes through “intermediary institutions.” These intermediary institutions resembled, using Balogh’s term, “a politically palatable mix” of governmental institutions at all levels, business, educational institutions, and civic groups from organized society that connected individual citizens from unorganized society to their government through indirect means. This mix, in turn, created the extension of governance through private and semi-public organizations that were perceived as less threatening to liberty, while also allowing the government to enact desired policies.²⁹ Such intermediary institutions were integral to the mobilization of the United States for the First World War, as evidenced by my focus on just such an organization – the North Carolina Council of Defense. The integration of all the elements of the associational order into a warfare state, tying together all elements of American society for the purpose of mobilization, resulted in an “associational state” that was able to achieve the nation’s collective goals without overtly clashing with the American belief in individual freedom, resulting in a less centralized, bureaucratic, or administrative national governing structure. According to Balogh, this associational state, with its reliance on intermediary institutions, “adapt[ed] public policy prescriptions to prevailing conceptions of the proper balance between collective ends and individual opportunity.”³⁰ The associational state was remarkably capable, yet its very flexibility

²⁹ Balogh, *The Associational State*, 5. Balogh’s conception of association harkens back to Ellis Hawley, who originally coined the term “associative action,” Ellis W. Hawley, “Herbert Hoover, the Commerce Secretariat, and the Vision of an ‘Associative State,’” *Journal of American History* 61, no. 1 (June 1974): 116-140. Balogh later expanded this idea into the terms “associational order” and the “associational state.”

³⁰ Balogh, *The Associational State*, 5.

could nonetheless also easily produce inequalities, disruption, and conflict, as Elisabeth Clemens has reminded us in her analysis of philanthropy and American Political Development.³¹

An Institutional History of the Associational State in the First World War

This dissertation offers a political and institutional history of American mobilization for war in 1917-18, focusing on the North Carolina Council of Defense as an intermediary, state-level organization of the U.S. warfare state. While my analysis includes some discussion of language and discourse, it is primarily focused on institution-building, policymaking, the use and effect of political rhetoric, and the forms, processes, and results of mobilization activities.

My analysis, then, foregrounds the perspective of the actors that lent shape to the making, and subsequent activities, of the North Carolina Council of Defense. Key actors include Governor Thomas Bickett and Dr. D.H. Hill, Jr. for the North Carolina Council of Defense; Adjutant General Beverly Royster and John Langston, who ran the military mobilization in the state through the Council's Military Committee; Henry Page and Jane McKimmon who drove resource conservation while sitting on or engaging through the state Council's committees on Conservation and Economy and Food Administration Committee; Laura Holmes Reilley, member of the state Council and chair of the state Woman's Committee and Charlotte Hawkins Brown, who diligently worked to ensure women were included in wartime activities; and also leaders of African American activities during the war, including Charles Hunter, Aaron Moore, and Ernest McKissick who battled exclusion from state mobilization and ensured Black communities were a part of the war.

The following analysis of North Carolina's mobilization for war draws upon four distinct sets of primary sources. First are the records and reports of government organizations, including

³¹ Clemens, *Civic Gifts*, 9-10.

those of the governor, adjutant general, county officials, and the state representatives of federal agencies during the war (such as the state Food and Fuel Administrations), which are located at the State Archives of North Carolina in Raleigh, N.C. I have also used material in city and county repositories like the North Carolina Rooms of local libraries, libraries of the many universities in the state, and archives in local historical societies. In connecting North Carolina and the state Council of Defense to the national mobilization and the country's overall war effort, I also used official documents and correspondence of the War Department, the U.S. Army, and the Council of National Defense, which are deposited in the National Archives in College Park, M.D., the Huntington Library in San Marino, C.A., and the Hoover Institution Archives at Stanford University, as well as material in the Center for Military History at Fort McNair in Washington, D.C., the Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle, P.A., and the Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library at Fort Leavenworth, K.S. These official documents allow me to understand and describe the establishment of the state Council of Defense, its structure, and its basic functions throughout the war. They also provide information on the Council's connections to non-state organizations and the parameters of those relationships. Finally, reports and official correspondence of governmental organizations detail basic metrics of outcomes, though these are corroborated with other sources such as personal correspondence, diaries, and other organization's reports, to ensure their accuracy and context. Many of these letters and diaries were found at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

The second set of sources that inform my analysis are those of organizations that had varying degrees of relationship to the state, the foremost among them from the North Carolina Council of Defense itself, which was the key intermediary institution in the state during the war. While the Council of Defense might be considered a formal organization of the government, in reality it was a temporary and dynamic mechanism designed to mediate between the state

government and the federal government, and more importantly, between the individual citizens of North Carolina, private groups of organized society, and the state government itself. This organization was neither a formal arm of the state government, nor separate from it, placing it within its own category for analysis. The records I have used include key county boards subordinate to the Council of Defense, where much of the local mobilization activities occurred. In addition to the Council of Defense records, I analyze the records and publications of private organizations that conducted mobilization activities such as the Red Cross, state universities, the state General Federation of Women's Clubs, African American churches and groups, and the Young Men's/Women's Christian Associations (Y.M.C.A./Y.W.C.A.).

The third group of sources include personal papers, correspondence, and memoirs of key actors in the mobilization of North Carolina. Here I have focused particularly on the members of the state Council of Defense and its subordinate councils, as well as select actors working in other intersecting organizations like the Red Cross, women's groups, and African American communities. I have used these sources to assess the motivations and justifications these actors gave for choices made and actions taken during mobilization. I then compare those actions and their effects to better understand the role personality and individual agency played beyond the structural factors detailed in official reports. For both the intermediary organizations and for personal papers, I have found the majority of my material at the State Archives of North Carolina in Raleigh, N.C., as well as in county and local archives in North Carolina, including the Lower Cape Fear Historical Society in Wilmington, N.C., Joyner Library Special Collections at Eastern Carolina University in Greenville, N.C., the Mecklenburg County Library in Charlotte, N.C., Rubenstein Library Special Collections at Duke University in Durham, N.C., and Wilson Library's Special Collections at University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, N.C.

Finally, I have worked with print media of various sorts including periodicals, magazines, newspapers, and local histories to analyze the public-facing communications of the state Council of Defense and private organizations, as well as reactive public commentary about mobilization and the Council of Defense. These materials were found in online databases, as well as in the state, county, and local archives.

Organization

This dissertation is organized topically, addressing different elements of the North Carolina Council of Defense and the mobilization for the First World War. Each chapter roughly overlaps in time, indicating the interactive relationship of mobilization activities across the life of the state Council of Defense.

Chapter 1 explores the making of the North Carolina Council of Defense, which was established in May 1917. It establishes the broader context within which it was established, from the preparedness movement up to the U.S. entry into the war and subsequent turn to wartime mobilization. The chapter then analyzes the distinct structure the Council took as it shaped what mobilization activities were undertaken and how they were achieved, though there was evolution in form and function as the war progressed. From its inception, the Council acted as an intermediary institution for the American wartime associational state, extending federal power in some areas, maintaining state sovereignty in others, and coordinating private groups and individuals into the war effort.

The North Carolina Council of Defense organized itself to work along three different tracks: an executive track which directed the work, a committee track which organized the work, and a public-private track which integrated organized society into mobilization. This three-track structuring reflected the Council's intermediary position. It extended federal power by channeling

desires and requirements from the Council of National Defense down to local leadership and through functional committee work. It also structured the work around the issues most important to it, largely by the committee system, but also in terms of which private entities it integrated into mobilization.

Chapter 2 explores the mobilization of military power in the state and the role of the North Carolina Council of Defense in increasing the state's capability to put men into uniform. The chapter pays particular attention to the role of the state in generating support for military manpower, the mobilization and deployment of all the state's National Guard forces, and the intersection of the Council of Defense and the national government regarding the Selective Service conscription system. Their efforts expanded the power of the national government down to the local level, as well as increased the capacity and capability of the state and nation for war. The ability of the state, led by the North Carolina Council of Defense, to generate sufficient military capability illuminates the strength of the American associational state – the United States did not need a strong centralized national state to obtain the military manpower it needed for a global and industrial conflict.

While expanding the power of the national government, the North Carolina Council of Defense closely controlled the state's participation and shaped how federal requirements for the military mobilization were executed. Through a distinctive politics of inclusion and exclusion, the Council mediated, influenced, and ultimately controlled mobilization activities to address the concerns of state elites and their white constituents, ensuring the continuity of the state's Democrat-led white supremacist order during and after the war.

Chapter 3 explores the role of the North Carolina Council of Defense in managing statewide efforts at resource conservation and production. Throughout the war, North Carolina was required to not only mobilize men for service in uniform, but also coordinate and expand the

physical and financial resources needed to prosecute the war. These activities also required the coordination of significant amounts of manpower, sometimes coming into direct conflict with the mobilization of men for the military. Because of this, wartime requirements placed on North Carolina were a constant balancing act for leaders in the state. The North Carolina Council of Defense became the primary mechanism for coordinating and balancing such requirements.

The state Council's leaders deliberately chose men to lead resource mobilization efforts in the state, as well as used its structure down to the local level to reduce the proliferation of federal, state, and private organizations engaged in mobilization separately. Who the state Council chose to manage resource mobilization indicated strategic choices by the men leading North Carolina, exercising their power not only at the state and local level, but also in naming the representatives of national efforts in federal agencies like the Food and Fuel Administrations, the various entities managing labor, and the groups raising funds to support the financial requirements of the war. These strategic choices extended the reach of the North Carolina Council of Defense deeper into the state. It also ensured a measure of control and increased the capacity to manage the requirements and organizations the national government used to conduct mobilization activities.

Chapter 4 focuses on women in the state and how the North Carolina Council of Defense employed a politics of inclusion and exclusion to ensure the maintenance of the patriarchal socio-political order of the state. While white women were represented on the state Council through a Woman's Committee, the activities the state Council supported or encouraged them to undertake were specific to what male leaders thought was appropriate for women. The bifurcation of work based on gender created a situation in which the participation of women required constant negotiation.

In areas regarding the home and the family, the traditional “female dominion,” the Woman’s Committee was able to take control and have an impact on mobilization in the state. As the men of the national and state Councils primarily saw the Woman’s Committee as a way to usefully channel women’s work, the performance of women in these areas were seen by them as a success. However, in areas that overlapped with concerns of men, the Woman’s Committee had to negotiate their ability to mobilize and organize the women of the state through building relationships and coalitions with men. In the eyes of the men on the North Carolina Council of Defense, the failures of the Woman’s Committee to advance its agenda in these areas was also a success, ensuring the pre-war economic, social, and political hierarchies of power in the state.

Chapter 5 explores African American participation in North Carolina’s mobilization and how the state Council’s politics of inclusion and exclusion was designed to deliberately prevent African American integration into wartime activities in the state. Despite increasing pressure from the federal government as the war progressed, the North Carolina Council of Defense refused to effectively integrate African Americans in the state for mobilization. Instead, the Council named a few select, trusted Black elites to serve as token communicators to African Americans communities. Where the Council of National Defense viewed the integration of Black Americans into wartime activities as crucial to increase the capacity of the nation to mobilize for war, the state Council saw the possibility of political and social breakdown. Throughout the war, the state Council only regarded Black communities as sources of unskilled labor.

By the end of the war, the North Carolina Council of Defense had successfully prevented large scale organizing or integration of African Americans into the mobilization of the state for the First World War. It also successfully fended off intrusion of the national government into this issue. In the eyes of the men running the North Carolina Council of Defense, there was no need to tap into African American manpower to meet the mobilization requirements set by federal

policymakers. More importantly, the white political elites in the state were able to maintain the pre-war, white supremacist socio-political order.

Together, these five chapters describe the intermediary role played by the North Carolina Council of Defense in the mobilization for the First World War. Positioned between the national government and the people of North Carolina, and mediating the activities of public, private, and individual efforts in support of mobilization activities, the state Council was instrumental in expanding federal and state capacity and capability for military and resource mobilization. The Council also contained the impact of the war on the state's white supremacist and patriarchal socio-political system.

Writing to New Haven County Council Chair, J.G. McCormick, in August 1917, state Council Chair D.H. Hill, Jr. commiserated with his counterpart as to the challenges of organizing the state for war, but also cautioned that "all war arrangements are but schools in patience."³² The evolving nature of the North Carolina Council of Defense over the course of the First World War, captured by Hill's words, is indicative of other states and the nation as a whole in this time period. The improvisational character of the state Council and its activities throughout the war reflect the broader innovative, flexible, changing character of the entire American mobilization, spanning from the national to the local level. Understanding North Carolina's wartime mobilization brings into sharp focus the other defining features of the American warfare state from 1917-1919, including its associational character which allowed for both an expansion of the infrastructural capability of the national state and a defense of the interests of regional and local elites.

³² Hill to McCormick, 15 August 1917, Folder 14, Box 11, WWI 1.

Chapter 1:

“Only by Continuous and Organized Effort”: The Council of Defense System & North Carolina¹

In the summer of 1917, Governor Thomas Bickett of North Carolina was unequivocal in his efforts to coordinate his state’s support of America’s war effort. American soldiers “could not hold the trenches if they felt that there was treachery, cowardice, and incompetency in the rear,” he proclaimed, but if those “who are left behind shall do their work with as much heroism and self-denial as those who go to the front, the welfare of the State will be secure.”² The ability of Bickett and his government to coordinate the state’s mobilization for the First World War was crucial to the overall war effort, as well as ensuring the stability and prosperity of North Carolina during wartime. However, the ability of the state to balance the desires of the federal government and the interests of North Carolina’s political and business elites would require robust coordination to manage the mobilization. The United States declared war on 6 April 1917, embroiling North Carolina in a global conflict, with Bickett declaring that, “There can be no neutrality...it behooves every loyal citizen to do everything in his power to make the licking that we are going to give Germany as speedy and as complete and final as possible.”³

The full-throated support for war was a relatively new position for many public officials in North Carolina. A year before Bickett’s public appeal, the United States was divided over its role in the two-year-old conflict. Since its outbreak in 1914, President Woodrow Wilson led the

¹ North Carolina Council of Defense, *Plan of Organization* (Raleigh, N.C.: Commercial Printing Company, 1917), 11.

² Thomas W. Bickett, “The Disloyalty of the Reserves,” in Santford Martin and R.B. House, eds., *Public Letters and Papers of Thomas Walter Bickett: Governor of North Carolina, 1917-1921* (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1923), 125.

³ Bickett to Alexander, 11 August 1917, Folder 1, P.C. 216.1, Thomas W. Bickett Papers, Personal Collections, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C. (hereafter P.C. 216).

country on a course of neutrality, attempting to use mediation and international law to prevent American entry into the war. By the summer of 1916, however, he saw the value, politically and for the nation's security, of taking more active steps toward a better prepared military. He pushed for an expanded military and mechanisms to prepare the nation to defend itself, if required, while also campaigning for re-election as the president that "kept us out of the war." After Wilson's re-election in 1916, and believing America was already in the war on the side of the Allies based upon its material support of Britain and France, the German government reinstated unrestricted submarine warfare. By attacking global shipping with their most capable military asset, the submarine, the German leadership believed they could starve Britain into submission by destroying the food and wartime supplies London needed to continue fighting. The German government gambled that they would knock Britain out of the war before the United States could build up the necessary forces to intervene on the battlefields. In response to the resumption of submarine attacks, the United States entered the war. The race between an American mobilization and a German campaign of exhaustion began.⁴

The emergency nature of America's entry into the war and the nation's unpreparedness to expand, project, and sustain its forces overseas resulted in a scramble to coordinate a national mobilization for wartime. This chapter explores how the United States structured its home front mobilization for the war. It demonstrates how the emergency nature of the conflict and the political dynamics of America in the early twentieth century led the various levels of government to experiment with ways to generate the resources needed for the war. Experimentation included leveraging extant governance relationships based on America's decentralized federalist system, the centralization of some elements of mobilization at the federal level, and innovative amalgamations of both decentralization and centralization that integrated governmental power

⁴Michael S. Neiberg, *The Path to War: How the First World War Created Modern America* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2016), 215-219.

and private, non-governmental groups. Experimentation and negotiation between the federal, state, local, and private sectors led to a wartime mobilization system built by the country's associational order that integrated the public and private at the national and local levels. A governance system built through the associational order allowed for variations in power across the country and within the functions of mobilization, tied to the strength of ideology and interests of those involved, as well as the amount of leverage each actor possessed to shape national goals. In the South, mobilization activities were enthusiastically supported in some areas, but curtailed or reduced in others, largely dependent on how it reinforced or undermined the social and political hegemony of the white, male, plutocratic order established by the beginning of the twentieth century. The wartime associational order extended the power of the national state into areas it was unable to access before the war, but it also created boundaries that challenged political development and centralization by the federal government.

Political cleavages in the United States before the entry into the First World War established the parameters for the subsequent military mobilization. The national and Congressional debates over preparedness from 1914-1917 closed multiple avenues that might have been pursued, leading to national registration and selective conscription over the traditional raising of volunteer military units, for instance. These cleavages also opened other opportunities, however, including the decentralization of mobilization activities to garner as much support from the states as possible, allowing local officials to tailor participation based upon local concerns.

The decision by the federal government to decentralize mobilization by investing states with their own Councils of Defense reflected the dual nature of the American associational state. On the one hand, there was the federalist nature of American governance. Officials of the national government, particularly Secretary of War Newton Baker, understood that the resources required for a national mobilization – from military manpower to food, fuel, and general support of the

American people – resided in the states and that federal agencies had limited statutory or administrative powers to organize those resources. It was the state governments that possessed the police powers and political legitimacy required for an intensive mobilization. On the other hand, the American associational state was dependent on the provision of core services and support from “organized society,” or the private enterprise and interest groups external to government that included businesses, universities, professional associations, fraternal organizations, and women’s clubs. Organized society was inherently local, even those with national organizations, as they were built upon the federalist system itself and generated support through state and local groups. So, in effect, the state Councils of Defense reflected the workings of the wartime American associational state, created as an extension to help integrate public and private efforts at the state level to generate consent, increase mobilization capability, and control a nation-wide mobilization effort.

The making of the North Carolina Council of Defense provides insight into how the wartime associational state worked in practice. The Council was managed by members of the state’s elites, including officials from state and local governments and representatives of powerful organized interests. Because of their position at a nexus of mobilization activities, these elites were able to shape the political, social, and economic effects of mobilization in the state.⁵ An extension of the associational state, the state Council also exemplified how governance by associationalism functioned in action. The state Council increased voluntary manpower for mobilization by generating consent and support, expanded the capacity of the federal effort through the execution of programs that could be scaled up to the national level, while also inhibiting federal power and the inclusion of some citizens in mobilization activities by controlling what actions the state employed and who could participate.

⁵ Penelope N. Brownell, “The Women’s Committees of the First World War: Women in Government, 1917-1919,” PhD diss. (Providence, R.I.: Brown University, 2002), 21.

What resulted was a flexible system that evolved as the federal government, state government, and organized society negotiated their requirements and preferences. At the outset of the war, the system evolved slowly, as the various stakeholders were unsure of what was required and who would meet the needs as they arose. The slow evolution continued despite furious machinations by government officials and private entities vigorously pushing to do ‘something’ for the war effort. As mobilization activities and organizations were solidified in the spring of 1918, the Council system gained speed and structure. By this time, the state Council of Defense became the key intermediary mobilization organization in North Carolina, integrating public and private efforts and bridging the divide between the national, regional, and local.

The mobilization of the United States balanced different, and at times, competing elements of the state and civil society in the generation of capability to support the war. Two particular competing ideas involved centralization at the federal level to create efficiency on the one hand, versus the need to decentralize to increase participation, but leading to inefficiency in the system.⁶ However, rather than a question of centralization versus decentralization, efficiency

⁶The former view is generally put forth by economic and military histories focused on those aspects of the mobilization, such as Daniel R. Beaver, *Newton D. Baker and the American War Effort 1917-1919* (Lincoln, N.E.: University of Nebraska Press, 1966); Robert D. Cuff, *The War Industries Board: Business-Government Relations during World War I* (Baltimore, M.D.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); John Patrick Finnegan, *Against the Specter of a Dragon: The Campaign for American Military Preparedness, 1914-1917* (Westport, C.T.: Greenwood Press, 1974); Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1982); John Whiteclay Chambers, *To Raise an Army: The Draft Comes to Modern America* (New York, N.Y.: Free Press, 1987); Paul A.C. Koistinen, *Mobilizing for Modern War: The Political Economy of American Warfare, 1865-1919* (Lawrence, K.S.: University Press of Kansas, 1997); Robert H. Zieger, *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience* (Lanham, M.D.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000). The latter view comes from social histories interested in social mobilization, citizenship, and obligation, such as Jeanette Keith, *Rich Man's War, Poor Man's Fight: Race, Class, and Power in the Rural South during the First World War* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2004). A few take a more nuanced view either by synthesizing both viewpoints or focusing on the Council System or subordinate organizations. See also William J. Breen, "Southern Women in the War: The North Carolina Woman's Committee, 1917-1919," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 55, no. 3 (1978): 251-83; David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1982); William J. Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home: Civilian Mobilization, Wartime Federalism, and the Council of National Defense, 1917-1919* (Westport, C.T.: Greenwood Press, 1984).

versus inefficiency, the mobilization of the United States for the First World War is better viewed as a balance of all these elements based upon what was politically possible according to electoral politics and the federalist and associational aspects of the America's governance structure. Even more importantly, it was not the federal level of governance, but rather the state level – and particularly how the state managed the mobilization through the Council of Defense as an intermediary institution – that acted as the key site of wartime mobilization. It was at this level that the American nation was able to generate the consent, capability, and control required to meet the requirements of the war while also balancing the extension of federal power in an associational state.

This chapter's analysis of America's mobilization for the First World War begins at the national level in 1916, as federal officials and the states' representatives in Congress debated and negotiated the place of the United States in a world at war. These debates would significantly shape how the nation ultimately structured mobilization when it entered the war. The story continues in North Carolina once the nation entered the First World War in April 1917, detailing the politics of the state and how they influenced support for the war and led to the creation of a state Council of Defense. Finally, as the key intermediary organization managing North Carolina's mobilization for the war, the story delves into the formation of the North Carolina Council of Defense in the summer of 1917, how it was structured to address the state's requirements for mobilization, and how that structure effected the state's activities from 1917-1919.

The Preparedness Movement and the March to War

In the summer of 1916, as the men of Europe were dying by the hundreds of thousands in the battles of Verdun and the Somme, the United States was engaged in a heated political battle

for the presidency. Democratic President Woodrow Wilson, nominated to run for a second term, ran on his record of economic reforms and American neutrality in the global conflict.⁷ Wilson was the first southern president to hold the office since the Civil War, and his supporters, particularly southern white Democrats, were crucial to both his domestic and foreign policies, as well as his re-election. Seeing themselves in Wilson, southerners “viewed Wilson as one of their own and rallied behind” him.⁸ Wilson’s Republican opponent, Charles Evans Hughes, was most recently a justice on the Supreme Court and a former Governor of New York. More importantly, Hughes was a confidante of former Republican presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Taft, and many considered him capable of bridging the divide created in the Republican Party by their feud in the run-up to the election of 1912 – a feud that ultimately resulted in Wilson’s election as Republicans split their vote among two candidates.⁹

The main issues of concern to American voters in 1916 stemmed from events abroad.¹⁰ In March, an ongoing civil war in Mexico boiled over the border when revolutionary leader Francisco “Pancho” Villa attacked Columbus, New Mexico to try to draw the United States into the war, resulting in the death of sixteen Americans. The robust military expedition into Mexico in response required a significant call out of National Guard units, including North Carolina’s,

⁷ This includes the best-known campaign tagline of “He Kept Us Out of the War,” which was an emergent thread that grew out of the Democratic Convention in St. Louis, beginning with the keynote address by former New York Governor Martin H. Glynn, who focused on Wilson’s actions that prevented America entering the war and, at that point, had forced the Germans to halt their submarine campaign. See Walter Millis, *Road to War: America 1914-1917* (New York, N.Y.: Houghton Mifflin, 1935), 318-319; Justus D. Doenecke, *Nothing Less Than War: A New History of America’s Entry into World War I* (Lexington, K.Y.: University Press of Kentucky, 2011), 207-208.

⁸ Joseph A. Fry, *Dixie Looks Abroad: The South and U.S. Foreign Relations, 1789-1973* (Baton Rouge, L.A.: Louisiana State University Press, 2002), 6.

⁹ Lewis L. Gould, *The First Modern Clash Over Federal Power: Wilson versus Hughes in the Presidential Election of 1916* (Lawrence, K.S.: University Press of Kansas, 2016), 1-18.

¹⁰ William W. Tinsley, “The American Preparedness Movement, 1913-1916,” PhD diss. (Stanford, C.A.: Stanford University, 1939), 334.

which sent all of its units except its coastal artillery forces.¹¹ The unreadiness of the military forces for the expedition, resulting in months-long delays, increased concerns about the country's ability to defend its borders.¹² Additionally, after two years remaining largely aloof from the conflict centered in Europe, it remained unclear whether the United States could long remain neutral in the devastating war, given the highly-profitable economic ties of American banks and companies to the Allies.¹³

Since the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, a coterie of American businessmen, Republican politicians, and military officers had agitated for increased spending and attention to overall military preparedness for defensive purposes.¹⁴ Through a robust publicity campaign, led by former President Theodore Roosevelt and the then-Army Chief of Staff General Leonard Wood, Republicans and their supporters eroded Wilson's credibility on security by portraying his adherence to neutrality as idealistic, cowardly, and dangerous. As the November 1916 election loomed, the "glamorously martial and yet by definition wholly pacific" idea of preparedness, according to historian John Whiteclay Chambers, became an "incomparable instrument" for Hughes and his party to challenge Wilson by addressing both war hawks and anti-war activists.¹⁵

¹¹ There are great unit histories of the participating North Carolina National Guard units, which included Joseph Hyde Pratt as an officer of what later became the 105th Engineer Regiment, in the boxes of Military Organizations, WWI Papers, 1903-1933, Military Collections, State Archives, Raleigh, N.C., as well as in the John Van Bokkelen Metts Papers, WWI 62, WWI Papers, Military Collections, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C.

¹² Charles H. Harris and Louis R. Sadler, *The Great Call-Up: The Guard, the Border, and the Mexican Revolution* (Norman, O.K.: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015), 3-8, 98, 451-454.

¹³ Neiberg, *The Path to War*, 98-100; Doenecke, *Nothing Less Than War*, 224-227.

¹⁴ Tinsley, "The American Preparedness Movement," 349; Doenecke, *Nothing Less Than War*, 188-215; Neiberg, *The Path to War*, 129-170.

¹⁵ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 73-102. For more on the American preparedness movement, see John Garry Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers: The Plattsburg Training Camp Movement, 1913-1920* (Lexington, K.Y.: University Press of Kentucky, 1972); Finnegan, *Against the Specter of a Dragon*; John Carver Edwards, *Patriots in Pinstripe: Men of the National Security League* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, Inc., 1982); Ross A. Kennedy, *The Will to Believe: Woodrow Wilson, World War I, and America's Strategy for Peace and Security* (Kent, O.H.: Kent State University Press, 2009), 1-42; Doenecke, *Nothing Less Than War*, 206-207; Neiberg, *The Path to War*, 129-130.

Wilson and his advisors, cognizant of this political danger and concerned about the state of American military preparedness, pivoted.¹⁶ Acknowledging to his Secretary of War that “the demand for reasonable preparedness is clear enough,” Wilson began to publicly support the development of plans and legislation for military reorganization and expansion, projects that both the Army’s General Staff and the Navy’s General Board had been advocating for since 1914.¹⁷ Wilson’s cooptation of the Republican’s issue of preparedness “dramatically altered the context of the debate over the adequacy of the nation’s armed forces,” wrote Chambers.¹⁸ It allowed Wilson to focus political debate on what type of preparedness was needed, versus who was to blame for any deficiency in military efficiency – a debate in which he would be vulnerable as the commander-in-chief.

Wilson launched his shift in policy with remarks in New York City, the stronghold of Hughes, Roosevelt, and their supporters. Addressing the Manhattan Club, the President focused on the need to ensure a trained and well-equipped military, but one that was “prepared, not for war, but only for defense.”¹⁹ Wilson’s new policy meant a military that was capable of providing “the mobilization of the resources of the nation at the proper time if it should ever be necessary to mobilize them for national defense,” but not a professional force separated from society.²⁰ The President immediately followed up these remarks with his annual message to a Joint Session of

¹⁶ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 103-124; Tinsley, “The American Preparedness Movement,” 279, 350; Neiberg, *The Path to War*, 144-145; Charles E. Neu, *Colonel House: A Biography of Woodrow Wilson’s Silent Partner* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2015), 206.

¹⁷ Woodrow Wilson to Lindley Garrison, 19 Aug 1915, in Woodrow Wilson and Arthur S. Link, *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 34 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980), 248; U.S. War Department, “Adoption of a proper military policy,” memorandum, File #9053, Roll 20, M-921, Record Group 165, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, M.D. (hereafter RG 165, NARA); Tumulty to Wilson, 21 Jul 1915 and 9 Aug 1915, Box 47, Joseph P. Tumulty Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereafter Tumulty papers).

¹⁸ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 103; Tinsley, “The American Preparedness Movement,” 279, 353-354.

¹⁹ Woodrow Wilson, “Address to the Manhattan Club, New York City, 4 November 1915,” in Albert Shaw, ed., *The Messages and Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (New York, N.Y.: G.H. Doran, 1924), 128.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 130-131.

Congress in December 1915, speaking to the importance of training a larger segment of society for military service and equipping them as soldiers.²¹ Wilson also expanded his conception of preparedness beyond the military itself into domestic affairs, recognizing the need for “the creation of the right instrumentalities by which to mobilize our economic resources in any time of national necessity.”²² The need to manage the nation’s industrial and economic resources in a time of crisis, including integrating professionals from the private sector and groups from organized society to extend federal mobilization capability, would become an increasingly important issue for Americans as tensions grew with Mexico and Germany in 1916.

Wilson decided to take the issue of his new preparedness program to the American people. He held an abiding faith in democratic principles and governance by a consenting populace.²³ Wilson also believed in his own intellect and righteousness, as well as his power to persuade and convince others to his way of thinking. His faith in democracy (and in his own superiority) led him to frequently take actions to directly educate and convince the American people as to his preferred policies, rather than leaving the issues in the hands of the party system or Congress, leveraging the interest group element of the associational state to overcome resistance from formal governance structures. Much like Theodore Roosevelt before him, Wilson used the presidency to sell his programs and shape public opinion, which could then shape congressional and executive action.²⁴ Preparedness was no different. Wilson undertook an

²¹ Woodrow Wilson, “Third Annual Message Delivered before Congress in Joint Session, 7 December 1915,” in Shaw, *The Messages and Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 138-139.

²² Ibid., 152; Terrence James Gough, “The Battle of Washington: Soldiers and Businessmen in World War I,” PhD diss. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1997), 189.

²³ Arthur S. Link, *Wilson the Diplomatist: A Look at His Major Foreign Policies* (Baltimore, M.D.: Johns Hopkins Press, 1957), 32-33.

²⁴ Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2007), 23. For more on the rhetorical presidency and its intersection with concepts like the associational state, see James W. Ceaser, Glen E. Thurow, Jeffrey Tulis, and Joseph M. Bessette, “The Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency” in *Rethinking the Presidency*, ed. Thomas E. Cronin (Boston, M.A.: Little, Brown, 1982), 233-52; Jeffrey K. Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987); Martin J. Medhurst, ed., *Beyond the*

extended speaking tour of the Midwest to help generate public support for this political and policy shift.²⁵ In speaking to the war-wary states west of the Appalachian Mountains, Wilson focused on clearly identifying threats currently posed to the country as “depend[ing] upon the aroused passions of other nations.”²⁶ According to Wilson, the United States required not aggressive militarism or a build-up to war, but rather “a force of men who can prevent an initial disaster, so that there will be no first failure, no first invasion, no first disaster.”²⁷ Such a force would not create a larger military establishment, but focus on “a trained citizenship which will act in the spirit of citizenship and not in the spirit of military establishments.”²⁸ Wilson sold his preparedness program as a way to increase participation in and perception of citizenship and the defense of the nation, not a route to an increasingly militarized society or entry into war. In addition to countering anti-war groups and states against entry into the First World War, Wilson was also speaking to the South, which was wary of preparedness and feared it as a first step toward war.²⁹

Rhetorical Presidency (College Station, T.X.: Texas A&M University Press, 1996); Richard Ellis, ed., *Speaking to the People: The Rhetorical Presidency in Historical Perspective* (Amherst, M.A.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998); Leroy G. Dorsey, ed., *The Presidency and Rhetorical Leadership* (College Station, T.X.: Texas A&M University Press, 2002); Elvin T. Lim, “Five Trends in Presidential Rhetoric: An Analysis of Rhetoric from George Washington to Bill Clinton,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (June 2002): 328-66, and Lim, *The Anti-Intellectual Presidency: The Decline of Presidential Rhetoric from George Washington to George W. Bush* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2008); and Robert P. Saldin, “William McKinley and the Rhetorical Presidency,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (March 2011): 119-134.

²⁵ Shaw, *The Messages and Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 126-214.

²⁶ Woodrow Wilson, “Address at St. Louis, M.O., 3 February 1916,” in Shaw, *The Messages and Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 212.

²⁷ Woodrow Wilson, “Address to Citizens in Kansas City, M.O., 2 Feb 1916,” in Shaw, *The Messages and Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 206.

²⁸ Woodrow Wilson, “Address at St. Louis, M.O., 3 February 1916,” in Shaw, *The Messages and Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 213.

²⁹ Michael Kazin, *War Against War: The American Fight for Peace, 1914-1918* (New York, N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 2017), 123-134; Neiberg, *The Path to War*, 154-160.

At the same time Wilson was touring the American Midwest by train, Congress began holding hearings into the proposed preparedness plans of Wilson's War Department. The centerpiece of these plans focused on the creation of a significant federal military reserve force of 400,000 men. The resulting 'Continental Army' would be trained over a span of three years and be capable of quickly entering service under federal control to defend the country from invasion.³⁰ Beyond an exclusive focus on growth, the discussions between Republican senators on the Committee on Military Affairs and military leadership also included a nascent idea of a "council of national defense" that could coordinate between the Army, Navy, and private industry to develop detailed plans and capture the requirements of the military and communicate them back to Congress.³¹ Grasping onto this idea of coordination between executive military departments and the legislative branch regarding foreign and military policy, Republicans in the House attempted to legislate a mechanism whereby they could intervene more directly into defense planning.³² Such a mechanism would not only inject the legislative branch into the executive branch's prerogatives regarding foreign policy and military planning, but also left the

³⁰ United States, Congress, Senate, Hearings Before the Committee on Military Affairs, Reorganization of the Army and the Creation of a Reserve Army, 18 Jan 1916 - 8 Feb 1916, pages 12-13, Government Printing Office, 1916, 64th Congress, 1st Session, https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/result/congresultpage:pdfevent?rsId=17836972F4A&pdf=/app-bin/gis-hearing/0/9/2/a/hrg-1916-mas-0002_from_1_to_1056.pdf&uri=/app-gis/hearing/hrg-1916-mas-0002, accessed 14 Jan 2022.

³¹ United States, Congress, Senate, Hearings Before the Committee on Military Affairs, Reorganization of the Army and the Creation of a Reserve Army, 18 Jan 1916 - 8 Feb 1916, pages 619-620, Government Printing Office, 1916, 64th Congress, 1st Session, https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/result/congresultpage:pdfevent?rsId=17836972F4A&pdf=/app-bin/gis-hearing/0/9/2/a/hrg-1916-mas-0002_from_1_to_1056.pdf&uri=/app-gis/hearing/hrg-1916-mas-0002, accessed 14 Jan 2022.

³² Seen in House Bill H.R. 9906, introduced by Frederick Albert Britten (R-IL) on 24 Jan 1916; referred to Committee on Naval Affairs, Government Printing Office, 1916, 64th Congress, 1st Session, https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/docview/t01.d02.64_hr_9906_ih_19160124?accountid=10598 and [https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/result/pqpresultpage.gispdfhitspanel.pdfink/\\$2fapp-bin\\$2fgis-billtext\\$2ff\\$2f9\\$2f4\\$2f7\\$2f64-hr9906-000ih-19160124.pdf/entitlementkeys=1234%7Capp-gis%7Cbilltext%7C64_hr_9906_ih_19160124](https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/result/pqpresultpage.gispdfhitspanel.pdfink/$2fapp-bin$2fgis-billtext$2ff$2f9$2f4$2f7$2f64-hr9906-000ih-19160124.pdf/entitlementkeys=1234%7Capp-gis%7Cbilltext%7C64_hr_9906_ih_19160124), accessed 14 Jan 2022; Seward W. Livermore, *Politics Is Adjourned: Woodrow Wilson and the War Congress, 1916-1918* (Middletown, C.T.: Wesleyan University Press, 1966), 88-101.

War Department and White House open to the interference of state and regional influences through their elected congressional delegations. Ultimately, the War Department's Continental Army plan and its supporters met with robust pushback from anti-militarist legislators and a strong National Guard Association, leading to its failure and the resignation of Wilson's first Secretary of War, Lindley Garrison.³³

Newton Baker, a former mayor of Cleveland and ardent supporter of Wilson in 1912, replaced Garrison. Chosen for his political value to Wilson as both a native Midwesterner and a professed pacifist, Baker was also an experienced lawyer who could manage War Department contracts' legal intricacies and argue for Wilson's foreign policy based in neutrality and mediation.³⁴ Baker's first task was to disentangle Wilson's preparedness policies from Garrison's failed Continental Army plan. He did this by moderating War Department requests for a large federal reserve, focusing on improving the effectiveness of the National Guard and its integration into the Regular Army in times of crisis.³⁵ Baker's approach allowed him to, according to his biographer Daniel Beaver, "secure a piece of army legislation that would quiet moderate preparedness forces without offending the antimilitarists."³⁶ The result was the National Defense Act of 1916, signed by Wilson on 3 June of that year. It integrated the National Guard into the Regular Army, including the institutionalization of a Militia Bureau in the War Department to manage the mobilization and pay of personnel in the organized militia.³⁷ In relation to industrial

³³ Garrison to Wilson, 9 February 1916 and Breckinridge to Wilson, 10 February 1916, Box 521, Henry S. Breckinridge, Breckinridge Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereafter Breckinridge Papers); Richard S. Faulkner, "The School of Hard Knocks: Combat Leadership in the American Expeditionary Forces," PhD diss. (Manhattan, K.S.: Kansas State University, 2008), 144, 205-218.

³⁴ Beaver, *Newton D. Baker*, 3-4; C. H. Cramer, *Newton D. Baker: A Biography* (Cleveland, O.H.: World Publishing Company, 1961), 77-79; Douglas B. Craig, *Progressives at War: William G. McAdoo and Newton D. Baker, 1863-1941* (Baltimore, M.D.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 112.

³⁵ Tinsley, "The American Preparedness Movement, 288; Craig, *Progressives at War*, 145-146.

³⁶ Beaver, *Newton D. Baker*, 13; Craig, *Progressives at War*, 157.

³⁷ United States, Congress, National Defense Act, 3 June 1916, page 203, Public Law 64-85, Section 81, 64th Congress, 1st Session,

mobilization, the law also allowed the President to “appoint a Board on Mobilization of Industries Essential for Military Preparedness” as a tool to gather information and coordinate the purchase of necessary military material in the event of war.³⁸ Though not employed in any meaningful way until months later, this provision was the first opportunity to integrate non-governmental personnel and interest groups into mobilization activities and leverage the power of the associational state.

As the presidential campaign gained speed in the late summer of 1916, Baker continued to balance policymaking between the multiple interest groups battling over preparedness. On the one hand, Baker needed to support a president trying to improve his reputation for preparedness while simultaneously running on a peace platform. On another, Republicans continued to challenge Baker’s moderate ideas and attempted to gain more power over military and foreign policy decision-making. Opposite the Republicans, anti-militarists and anti-war activists and legislators, primarily from the South and West and crucial to Wilson’s re-election campaign, pushed against legislation that included increased authorities and funding to the military. Though he typically led efforts against preparedness, the anti-war representative from North Carolina, Claude Kitchin, ultimately shaped the bill more to his liking and saw the political benefit in supporting his Democratic president.³⁹ Finally, Baker managed senior military leaders, many of whom had been pushing for increased preparedness since 1914, and worked enthusiastically with Garrison on the Continental Army Plan.⁴⁰ Taking advantage of the upcoming Army

https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/docview/t41.d42.64_pl_85?accountid=10598, accessed 14 Jan 2022.

³⁸ Ibid., 213-214; Gough, “The Battle of Washington,” 189-190.

³⁹ Kazin, *War Against War*, 90-103, 117-123.

⁴⁰ U.S. Army War College, Memorandum on a “Proper Military Policy,” 26 Apr 1915; Bliss to Breckinridge, Memorandum on force structure, 26 Apr 1915; Garrison to the Army War College,

appropriations bill, the last piece of legislation to address military affairs before the November 1916 election, Baker and his congressional allies worked to leverage the Republicans' ideas on a centralized, advisory body to study and make recommendations on preparedness while removing what they viewed as the more problematic aspects, specifically close ties to Congress. The result was the creation of a "Council of Executive Information for the Coordination of Industries and Resources for the National Security and Welfare" which would facilitate "the creation of relations which will render possible in time of need the immediate concentration and utilization of the industrial resources of the Nation."⁴¹ The unwieldy name died quickly in the debate over the appropriations bill, however. Democratic supporters slyly picked up the Republican's recommendation of a "Council of National Defense" from previous debates, as well as included prior recommendations for participation of advisors from outside Congress and retaining an academic function focused on data-gathering.⁴² When this appropriation bill was signed on 29

Memorandum on guidance for military policy, 3 May 1915, Box 520, Breckinridge Papers; Beaver, *Newton D. Baker*, 13; Craig, *Progressives at War*, 66.

⁴¹ United States, Congress, Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, Report No. 819, 16 Jun 1916, page 9, Government Printing Office, 1916, 64th Congress, 1st Session, https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/result/congresultpage:pdfevent?rsId=1783687079F&pdf=/app-bin/gis-serialset/3/e/2/2/6905_hrp819_from_1_to_10.pdf&uri=/app-gis/serialset/6905_h.rp.819, accessed 14 Jan 2022. The first public comments by President Wilson on the need for an advisory commission to study mobilization requirements comes in his December 1915 address to a Joint Session of Congress, Woodrow Wilson, "Third Annual Message to the Joint Session of Congress, 7 Dec 1915" in Shaw, *The Messages and Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 152-153. This approach toward an advisory body for mobilization was recommended at the very beginning of Baker's tenure when the Secretary of War asked the Army for recommendations. The Navy developed ideas along the same lines. The Departments of War and Navy submitted enabling legislation to the House Military Affairs Committee in May 1916, Gough, "The Battle of Washington," 182-183, 187-188.

⁴² United States, Congress, Senate, Amendment 138 to House Bill H.R. 16460, 29 Jul 1916, Government Printing Office, 1916, 64th Congress, 1st Session, <https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/result/congressional/congdocumentview:pdfannexevent?pdf=app-bin/gis-billtext/4/9/d/5/64-hr16460-00oph-19160729.pdf>, accessed 14 Jan 2022.

August 1916, the Council of National Defense was created, establishing “the first formal, ‘preparedness’ body within the administration,” according to historian William Breen.⁴³

The Council of Defense System

The Council of National Defense was initially composed of two elements: the executive committee and an Advisory Commission. Baker chaired the executive committee as the Secretary of War and was joined by the Secretaries of the Navy, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, and Labor. The exclusion of the Secretary of State as a member was deliberate, focusing the Council on domestic matters in support of military preparedness.⁴⁴ The executive committee was supported by staff from the Cabinet Secretaries’ own executive departments, as well as a small staff detailed primarily from the War Department to the national Council. The Council’s organic staff would grow significantly, however, resulting in an organization that included seven Advisory Commission committees, thirteen Council boards, and five administrative offices to manage files, correspondence, personnel, and finances, totaling over a hundred people only one month after war was declared.⁴⁵

Pulling from organized society, the Advisory Commission included seven prominent engineers, industrialists, and businessmen from the private sector, all nominated by President Wilson in October, initiating a trend in associationalism and the leveraging of expertise in

⁴³ Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 4; United States, Congress, Army Appropriations Act, 29 Aug 1916, pages 649-650, Public Law 64-242, 39 Stat. 619, Government Printing Office, 1916, 64th Congress, 1st Session, https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/result/congresultpage:pdfevent?rsId=17859FA507B&pdf=/app-bin/gis-statute/f/5/c/7/00039_stat_0619_100418.pdf&uri=/app-gis/statute/00039-stat-0619-100418, accessed 14 Jan 2022.

⁴⁴ Beaver, *Newton D. Baker*, 53.

⁴⁵ Council of National Defense, Organizational Chart, 7 May 1917, Director’s Office, Box 2-F2, Record Group 62, NARA (hereafter RG 62); Frederick Lewis Allen, “The Council of Defense System: A History Submitted to the Director of the Council of National Defense,” unpublished, pages 1-3, RG 62, 17-B.1, Box 1053, NARA; Finnegan, *Against the Specter of a Dragon*, 161. My most sincere thanks to Professor William J. Breen for providing me a copy of Allen’s “History” when COVID prevented me from conducting research at NARA for almost two years.

industry for mobilization throughout the First World War.⁴⁶ These men attempted to develop data and standardized lists that quantified industries' contemporaneous ability to support military requirements. Nevertheless, progress was relatively nonexistent until after the first joint meeting between the Council's executive committee and the Advisory Commission on 6 December 1916. Even then, the Council and its Advisory Commission was essentially an academic board or blue-ribbon panel focused on gathering information. This only changed in February 1917 when the United States broke off relations with Germany in response to the reinstatement of unrestricted submarine warfare, which threatened to kill innocent Americans aboard ships traversing the Atlantic Ocean and threatened American firms doing business with Britain and France.⁴⁷ The urgent sense of impending war began to shift the previously academic aspects of the Council of National Defense toward a wartime footing. Additionally, the Council began meeting every day to address the quickly evolving events, becoming the chief planning body of the administration in its preparation for possible war.⁴⁸

The expansion of a federal bureaucracy, even one built upon an associationalism that incorporated private individuals from organized society into public action, naturally took a national perspective. The Council's subordinate committees began to proliferate to address the information and coordination needs of an expanding military, addressing key industries, types of supply, and necessary mobilization functions spread across the vast nation. Early committees

⁴⁶ Secretary of War had a preference, particularly early in the mobilization, for the development of policy "through associations of individuals and interest groups rather than through expansion of the federal government's capacities," Craig, *Progressives at War*, 146.

⁴⁷ The Secretary of State to the German Ambassador, No. 2307, 3 February 1917, File No. 763.72/3179, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1917, Supplement 1, The World War, ed. Joseph V. Fuller (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1931), Document 97, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1917Supp01v01/d97>, accessed 14 Jan 2022 (hereafter *FRUS*).

⁴⁸ Council of National Defense, Minutes, 29 March 1917, M-1069, RG 62, NARA. The national Council also created a joint weekly conference between itself, all ten executive departments, and the national research council to coordinate all the war activities of the government, though it met less frequently than every week.

addressing national issues for preparedness included Medicine, Labor, Transportation and Communication, Science and Research, Raw Materials, Minerals and Metals, Munitions and Manufacturing, and Supplies Committees.⁴⁹ In time, these committees would spin off into their own emergency wartime agencies like the U.S. Railroad Administration, Fuel Administration, Food Administration, and War Industries Board.⁵⁰

At the same time, the Council of National Defense and its Advisory Commission were evolving their structure to manage a national mobilization, and individual states began to consider what steps they needed to take in the case of war. In the Northeast in particular, industrialized states like New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania established organizations to coordinate a survey of manpower and industrial capacity in their states, as well as communicate clear support for the actions of the national government regarding preparedness measures.⁵¹ The Council of National Defense generally welcomed these actions by the states but threatened to interfere with coordinated federal action. At a joint meeting of the Council of National Defense and the Advisory Commission in late March 1917, the latter's chair, Baltimore and Ohio Railroad president Daniel Willard, voiced concerns over the fragmentation of the management of information gathering and preparedness activities, stating that "unless these efforts [by the states] can be coordinated and directed by the federal authorities" the work of the states would not "coordinate with the program of the Federal Government...and will very likely...fail to produce the immediate results that are hoped for."⁵²

Spurred on by national attention on preparedness, the Council was inundated with offers of service or requests for support from individuals and interest groups across the country. Unable

⁴⁹ Council of National Defense, Organizational Chart, 7 May 1917, Director's Office, Box 2-F2, RG 62, NARA.

⁵⁰ Allen, "The Council of Defense System," 2-3; Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 4-5; Cuff, *The War Industries Board*, 13-42; Gough, "The Battle of Washington," 208-212.

⁵¹ Allen, "The Council of Defense System," 4-5; Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 5-8.

⁵² Council of National Defense, Minutes of the Council of National Defense, 23 Mar 1917, M-1069, RG 62, NARA.

to coordinate such a chaotic infusion of patriotic support, Baker and his initially small staff on the Council recognized the need to develop a system to encourage the patriotic fervor, while shaping action at a local level informed by guidance at the national level.⁵³ The Council of National Defense possessed only the minimal authority given it by Congress, which directed them to merely study American preparedness. Nascent state mobilization organizations like those in New England provided a possible answer. Professor Alfred Dennis of the University of Wisconsin highlighted this in a telegram to Baker on 26 March, encouraging the development of a coordinated system between the Council of National Defense and state organizations to survey state resources and generate support for governmental action.⁵⁴

Aside from the need to manage a quickly fragmenting national effort, the coordination of mobilization through state governments appealed to Baker. A former city mayor, his multiple decades of public service led him to believe that the solutions to most modern problems could “usually be found at the local level.”⁵⁵ Additionally, the federalism at the heart of the American system of governance meant that the resources needed for war, from manpower to materiel to local sentiment, and the ability to generate each were the province of the state and local governments.⁵⁶ In the early twentieth century, these resources were most effectively generated by private actors, whether the industrialists and businessmen that created the materiel needed for war, the local political, religious, and educational elites that informed public opinion, or the various interest groups that mobilized around issues of concern to their local communities.⁵⁷

These two axes, the remarkable power of the states within a federal system of governance and the

⁵³ Allen, “The Council of Defense System,” 6-9.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 7; Tinsley, “The American Preparedness Movement,” 295.

⁵⁵ Beaver, *Newton D. Baker*, 5; Craig, *Progressives at War*, 56.

⁵⁶ William J. Novak, *The People’s Welfare: Law and Regulation in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 10-13; Gary Gerstle, *Liberty and Coercion: The Paradox of American Government from the Founding to the Present* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2015), 1-13.

⁵⁷ Brian Balogh, *The Associational State: American Governance in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia, P.A.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 66-88.

capacity of organized society to expand governmental capability, were the key elements of the American associational state. They were also the primary reasons a federally centralized mobilization effort was not feasible. The national government would become dependent on the states in the First World War.⁵⁸

The declaration of war against Germany on 6 April 1917 prompted action by the Council to create a more integrated mobilization structure.⁵⁹ The Council decided that the way to manage “the harmful tendencies of state organization and to stimulate their good ones, was to recognize and direct” them, wrote national Council member and its postwar historian, Frederick Allen.⁶⁰ The Council sent a letter to the forty-eight governors and various territorial governments requesting that each establish their own Council of Defense, linked together into an overall national Council of Defense System.⁶¹ These state-level organizations would act as the focal point of federal guidance and requests for information, as well as coordinate the public and private efforts toward mobilization within their jurisdictions.⁶² In the eyes of the Council of National Defense they were “to be the local agencies, not only of the Council, but of the whole emergency administrative machine.”⁶³ With this move, the Council of National Defense chose an associational approach that placed the onus for mobilization on the states themselves, delegating the legitimacy, direction, and resources for state action to state governments and private organizations. Ultimately, the shifting of most major mobilization activities to the states created a

⁵⁸ The claim that the states were central to the First World War mobilization and that the associational state was the driving force behind the structuring of it is the central claim of this dissertation.

⁵⁹ President of the United States, “Proclamation of April 6, 1917 of the Existence of a State of War between the United States and Germany, 6 April 1917,” *FRUS*, 1917, Supplement 1, Document 240, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1917Supp01v01/d240>, accessed 14 Jan 2022.

⁶⁰ Allen, “The Council of Defense System,” 9

⁶¹ Martin to Bickett, 18 Apr 1917, Folder 4, G.P. 369, Governor’s Papers, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C. (hereafter G.P. 369); Baker to Bickett, 20 Apr 1917, Folder 4, “3-30 Apr 1917,” G.P. 369; Joseph Hyde Pratt, “History of the North Carolina Council of Defense,” unpublished manuscript, circa 1932, Box 1, Folder 1, Volume 1, page 8, Military Collection, WWI 1, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C. (hereafter WWI 1); Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 9.

⁶² Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 9.

⁶³ Allen, “The Council of Defense System,” 10.

nexus for mediation in these subordinate Councils of Defense. In turn, the states were forced to manage the dynamics between the federal and state governments, coordinate the activities and war work of organized society within the state, and incorporate the unorganized elements of the state into mobilization activities in support of the war. Extending the American associational state to lower levels, the state Councils became the key intermediary institutions that coordinated government, organized society, and individual citizens to mobilize the nation for war.

North Carolina and the March to War

North Carolina was a relatively late convert to the Council of Defense System. Unlike the industrial and populous states in the northeast, the southern states were wary of the implications of preparedness, which promised increasing military budgets, the possibility of war, and the likelihood of a disruptive conscription of military manpower. North Carolina congressional representatives in Washington provided some of the most vociferous voices against preparedness and conscription, including Representatives Edward Pou, chair of the Rules Committee, and Claude Kitchin, the powerful chair of Ways and Means Committee and majority leader of the House of Representatives. Both men, in addition to the two senators from North Carolina, Furnifold Simmons and Lee Overman, were politically conservative white supremacist southern Democrats.⁶⁴ Throughout the years following the outbreak of the First World War, the congressional members from North Carolina fought against the Republicans and preparedness.⁶⁵ Kitchin in particular stood in opposition to Wilson and the drift toward war, working with fellow Democrats on measures that appeared to endanger the neutrality of the United States or otherwise

⁶⁴ Stephen David Kantrowitz, *Ben Tillman & the Reconstruction of White Supremacy* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 256-262; David Traxel, *Crusader Nation: The United States in Peace and the Great War, 1898-1920* (New York, N.Y.: Vintage Books, 2006), 6; Emily Ruth Rutter, "Troubled Inheritance Confronting Old Hierarchies in the New South," *Southern Cultures* 25, no. 3 (Fall 2019): 156-164.

⁶⁵ Livermore, *Politics Is Adjourned*, 17.

threatened the militarization of American society.⁶⁶ After the President delivered his address to a joint session of Congress on 2 April 1917 calling for a declaration of war against Germany, Kitchin passionately fought against passing the measure and provided a rare nay vote on the bill to declare war against Germany.⁶⁷ Once war was declared, however, Kitchin lined up behind the President and joined the rest of the North Carolina delegation to support the war effort, mirroring the broad support for the war that grew across his state.⁶⁸

Governor Thomas Bickett was a progressive Democrat from the ‘modernizing’ faction of the one-party controlled state, gaining his seat on the coattails of President Wilson’s 1916 victory. In North Carolina, the failure of Reconstruction after their loss in the Civil War resulted in a political backlash against Republicans and other political parties that challenged the white supremacy of southern society and its Democratic Party. Political competition to the reinstatement of Democratic power was violently crushed throughout the state following the collapse of Reconstruction in 1877, culminating in a violent coup in Wilmington in 1898 that overturned a popularly elected, biracial fusion government of Republicans and Populists.⁶⁹ The coup was perpetrated by armed white supremacist gangs led by Simmons and Kitchin and stoked by anti-Republican and anti-Black propaganda published by Raleigh newspaperman, Josephus Daniels,

⁶⁶ Michael Kazin, “The Americans Who Opposed the Great War: Who They Were, What They Believed,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* (June 2017): 252.

⁶⁷ United States Congress, House, “U.S. House of Representatives Tally Sheet for the Declaration of War on Germany, April 6, 1917,” Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, NARA, <https://www.visitthecapitol.gov/exhibitions/artifact/us-house-representatives-tally-sheet-declaration-war-germany-april-6-1917>, accessed 14 Jan 2022.

⁶⁸ Neiberg, in *The Path to War*, discusses his assessment that the American people were largely ahead of President Wilson in favoring U.S. entry into the conflict, and this likely included North Carolinians. Once war was declared, even those state citizens initially against the war either began to support it, like Kitchin, accepted it, or quietly refused.

⁶⁹ Angela Robbins, “‘Doing Their Big Bit’: North Carolina’s Women on the Homefront,” in Shepherd W. McKinley and Steven Sabol, eds., *North Carolina’s Experience during the First World War* (Knoxville, T.N.: University of Tennessee Press, 2018), 250; David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson, *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); East Carolina University, “Politics of a Massacre,” <http://core.ecu.edu/umc/wilmington/index.html>, accessed 14 Jan 2022; Wilmington Race Riot Commission, *1898 Wilmington Race Riot Report* (Raleigh, N.C.: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 2006), <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p249901coll22/id/5842>, accessed 14 Jan 2022.

more than a decade before becoming President Wilson's Secretary of the Navy.⁷⁰ Such coercion was then codified in state legislation in 1899 when the General Assembly passed a constraining suffrage amendment to the state's constitution, stripping Black men of their right to vote.⁷¹

North Carolina's system of one-party governance belied the challenges and disparate powers inherent in the state's political structure. The Democratic Party managed or influenced all appointed or elected positions in the state and was dominated by Senator Simmons and his fellow white supremacists who had destroyed any political competition at the turn of the century.⁷² Such a configuration reduced the avenues of reform other party members might pursue. Structurally, however, state leaders were also challenged by one of the most fractionalized state executive branches in the nation.⁷³ Since 1899, the top ten executive positions were independently elected by the people of North Carolina, allowing for the creation of different political power bases in the executive branch. Additionally, many powers of the Governor – including the ability to convene the state General Assembly and borrow money – required the consent of the Council of State, a body codified in the state constitution.⁷⁴ In 1917, the Council of State included the Governor, the Secretary of State, the State Auditor, the State Treasurer, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction, each independently elected and able to stymie executive decision making.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Kantrowitz, *Ben Tillman*, 256-258; Lee A. Craig, *Josephus Daniels: His Life & Times* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 178-192.

⁷¹ The People's Party of North Carolina (The Populist Party), "The Proposed Suffrage Amendment: The Platform and Resolutions of the People's Party, April 18, 1900," *Civil War Era NC*, accessed April 24, 2021, <https://cwnc.omeka.chass.ncsu.edu/items/show/411>, accessed 14 Jan 2022.

⁷² Paul Luebke, *Tar Heel Politics: Myths and Realities* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 5; Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 205.

⁷³ Larry Sabato, *Goodbye to Good-Time Charlie: The American Governorship Transformed, 1950-1975* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Printing, 1983), 63-66.

⁷⁴ Jack D. Fleer, *North Carolina Government and Politics* (Lincoln, N.E.: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 119.

⁷⁵ North Carolina, Constitution of 1868, [https://www.ncleg.gov/documentsites/legislativepublications/Constitutions/NCCConstitution%20\(1868\).pdf](https://www.ncleg.gov/documentsites/legislativepublications/Constitutions/NCCConstitution%20(1868).pdf), accessed 14 Jan 2022; John L. Sanders and John F. Lomax, *Amendments to the Constitution of North*

Additionally, unlike every other state chief executive, North Carolina's governor did not possess the power of the veto.⁷⁶ As long as the members of the House and Senate could agree, North Carolina's General Assembly could pass legislation adverse to the Governor's agenda and he could not prevent it.⁷⁷ These core elements of politics in North Carolina – white supremacy, single party rule, diffuse power in the executive branch, and the inability of the Governor to prevent legislation – would come to shape choices made by Governor Bickett and the members of the state Council of Defense during the First World War.

By the first decade of the twentieth century the North Carolina Democratic Party had solidified a political and social order rooted in race, paternalism, and elite rule. Confident in their power, Democrats in North Carolina developed niche Progressive policies which “tended to enhance the interests of the business community” and “reinforce[d] the existing social, political and economic order,” according to political scientist Paul Luebke.⁷⁸ Their key issues included a dedication to public education (for white citizens), road-building, and efficient government (for white citizens), leading state leaders to try and position themselves as the most Progressive state in the South.⁷⁹ However, the state's Progressive image was more political rhetoric than reality, as it “existed side by side with social and economic facts that contradicted profoundly the state's

Carolina, 1776-1996 (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Institute of Government, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1997),

[https://www.ncleg.gov/documentsites/legislativepublications//Constitutions/Amendments%20to%20the%20Constitution%20of%20North%20Carolina%201776-1996%20\(UNC%20School%20of%20Government\).pdf](https://www.ncleg.gov/documentsites/legislativepublications//Constitutions/Amendments%20to%20the%20Constitution%20of%20North%20Carolina%201776-1996%20(UNC%20School%20of%20Government).pdf), accessed 14 Jan 2022.

⁷⁶ Fleer, *North Carolina Government and Politics*, 115-116.

⁷⁷ Luebke, *Tar Heel Politics*, 38.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁷⁹ Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, *North Carolina: The History of a Southern State* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1954); William S. Powell, *North Carolina: A History* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), and Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1989); Fleer, *North Carolina Government and Politics*.

reputation” and ultimately resulted in a Progressivism “for whites only,” as historians William Chafe and C. Vann Woodward have argued.⁸⁰ Therefore, the Democratic Party in North Carolina contained a spectrum of members and political programs that ran from traditionalist agrarian elite white supremacists to the more progressive modernizers focused on dynamic economic growth. The latter group accepted that some social change might be required to accomplish their economic goals.⁸¹ Bickett, a gifted speaker that ran on his record as the state’s attorney general, was decidedly toward the latter end of the spectrum.⁸² Taking office in January 1917, he quickly worked with the General Assembly, only in session the first few months of every other year, to address key issues he believed would improve the quality of life and the prosperity of the citizens of the state. Two of the issues he addressed would increase in importance with the onset of war; the expansion of instruction in agriculture and home economics throughout the state and increasing the duties of the state board of health and the board of charities and public welfare.⁸³

Within weeks of Bickett ascending to the governorship, his modernizing agenda would be transformed by the anticipation of war. When the German government rescinded its halt of unrestricted submarine warfare on 31 January 1917, Bickett took to the telegraph to support President Wilson in the press, writing to the *New York Times* that, “The people of North Carolina have the utmost confidence in the wisdom and patriotism of those who represent us in Washington, and this State will uphold their hands in whatever course it is deemed necessary to

⁸⁰ William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1980), 5; C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge, L.A.: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 369-375. North Carolina’s Progressivism paralleled that of national Progressivism in this way, including President Wilson’s own ideas on self-determination, seen in Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*.

⁸¹ Luebke, *Tar Heel Politics*, 18-22.

⁸² Bickett Club of Franklin County, pamphlet, “Bickett for Governor: The Record is the Reason,” 1915, <http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/ref/collection/p249901coll37/id/15595>, accessed 14 Jan 2022; Thomas W. Bickett, “Inaugural Address of T.W. Bickett, Governor of North Carolina,” (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1917), Folder 1, “Correspondence, January 4-31 1917,” G.P. 369.

⁸³ North Carolina General Assembly, “Public Laws and Resolutions of the State of North Carolina Passed by the General Assembly at its Session of 1917,” (Raleigh, N.C.: Edward & Broughton Printing Company, 1917), Chapter 170, 320-324, and Chapter 190, 339-342.

pursue.”⁸⁴ Later, he would write to the *New York World* that if American lives were lost going forward, “our people, as one man, without respect to race or politics, will uphold the President in whatever action he may take to preserve the honor and safety of the Nation.”⁸⁵ He continued to profess the loyalty of all North Carolinians in the heat of the patriotic upswell following the declaration of war between the United States and Germany. Addressing citizens of his state, as well as the broader American public, Bickett proclaimed that he had “supreme faith in the perfect loyalty of every class of our people, regardless of race or blood,” refuting some that were questioning the loyalty of both German-born and Black men and women in the state.⁸⁶

The North Carolina Council of Defense

Just as Governor Bickett was rhetorically preparing his state for war, the Council of National Defense in Washington, D.C. was trying to better incorporate the states and private interests into mobilization for the war. The Council established a Section on the Cooperation with States (later condensed to the State Councils Section) to manage correspondence with the states and begin structuring interactions within the associational state. The new head of the section, George Porter, organized a conference in Washington, D.C. for the beginning of May 1917 to convince the states to establish their own dedicated mobilization organizations. Porter envisioned linking each state together into a Council of Defense System that could be coordinated and standardized across the nation through his section. Porter, through Council of National Defense Chair and Secretary of War Newton Baker, requested that governors send representatives to this conference to develop a closer relationship between the states and the Council of National

⁸⁴ Bickett to the *New York Times*, 1 Feb 1917, Folder 1, G.P. 369.

⁸⁵ Bickett to the *New York World*, 3 Feb 1917, Folder 1, G.P. 369.

⁸⁶ Martin, *Public Letters and Papers of Thomas Walter Bickett*, 270; Theodore Kornweibel, Jr., *Investigate Everything: Federal Efforts to Compel Black Loyalty during World War I* (Bloomington, I.N.: Indiana University Press, 2002), 53-56.

Defense, as well as share “the methods of organization of State and local defense committees and of their cooperation with the Council of National Defense.”⁸⁷ To represent North Carolina, Bickett appointed educator, writer, and state geologist Joseph Hyde Pratt.⁸⁸ It was not uncommon for a governor in North Carolina to appoint an individual outside of government to represent him at conferences or on commissions, one element of a normally-functioning associational state that would be carried over into wartime. Pratt served as an integral part of North Carolina’s Council of Defense, from its founding to months after he put on a military uniform and left for training in September 1917.⁸⁹

In preparation for the conference, the Council of National Defense produced preliminary memoranda for each major federal agency and sent them to the state delegates. These memoranda communicated the functions each department anticipated performing during the war, as well as some indications of what they might request of the states.⁹⁰ The agencies clearly recognized the large amount of work ahead but were less articulate when addressing the role of states. The War Department, the organization led by the Council of National Defense chair, did not provide preliminary material. Scrambling to convince Congress to pass their conscription bill and still developing the rules and regulations for a draft, War Department leadership likely anticipated changes to occur frequently in the days leading up to the conference. With its ongoing experience battling food shortages at the state level since the outbreak of the war, the Department of

⁸⁷ Council of National Defense, Minutes of the Council of National Defense, 19 Apr 1917, M-1069, RG 62, NARA; Pratt, “History of the North Carolina Council of Defense,” 8.

⁸⁸ Baker to Bickett, 9 Apr 1917, Folder 2, Box 19, WWI 1; Council of National Defense to Bickett, 20 Apr 1917 and handwritten appointment of Pratt to states conference, Folder 4, G.P. 369. Bickett also originally commissioned Raleigh lawyer and real-estate mogul James H. Pou as an alternate delegate, but he did not attend: Bickett to Pou, 27 Apr 1917, Folder 1, P.C. 180.1, James Hinton Pou Papers, Personal Collections, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C. (hereafter Pou Papers).

⁸⁹ Thirtieth Division, “General Order No. 4,” Headquarters, 30th Division, Camp Sevier, S.C., 12 Sep 1917 in Willard P. Sullivan and Harry Tucker, *The History of the 105th Regiment of Engineers, Divisional Engineers of the “Old Hickory” (30th) Division* (New York, N.Y.: George H. Doran Company, 1919), 17.

⁹⁰ Council of National Defense, “Preliminary Memoranda for National Defense Conference called by the Secretary of War and Chairman of the Council of National Defense,” Box 19, Folder 1, WWI 1.

Agriculture provided the most thorough report. It covered in detail current and anticipated work on food production and conservation, as well as the mechanisms for which states could integrate themselves.⁹¹ All the other federal executive departments provided scant details, if any at all.

In comparison, a memorandum by the State Councils Section, simply titled “The National Service,” was notable in its robust vision for the mobilization of the nation, as well as the states’ role. The State Councils Section proposed leveraging the upcoming military registration for the “immediate voluntary enrollment of the capable citizenship simultaneously with the registration of young men for the Army and Navy.”⁹² As envisioned, this national registration of all adult citizens of the nation, both men and women, would be conducted at the local, county, and state levels and be managed by the new state Councils of Defense. The effort would provide significant benefits for the federal government, as Porter and the other members of the State Councils Section believed. First and foremost, it would create greater efficiencies in a home front mobilization by avoiding duplication and reducing delays in the application of effort and manpower – essentially create a centralized, national registry of labor that could be used to organize a dedicated workforce for mobilization needs. A national registry would be the most efficient and effective way to dramatically increase the capability of the nation to prepare for and fight the war. Additionally, the leaders of the Council of National Defense believed such a registration drive would immediately lay before the American people their individual obligations during the war, increase societal consciousness of the objects of the war, and even “stimulate the fighting forces to know the people are effectively organized.”⁹³ The government would not be able to effectively mobilize the nation without the consent of its people. A national registration was one way to begin the process of generating that consent.

⁹¹ Ibid., 15-20.

⁹² Ibid., 32.

⁹³ Ibid., 32.

Clearly, as state representatives prepared to descend on Washington, D.C. in April 1917, the main resource the Council of National Defense envisioned tapping into was manpower. The primary mechanism they envisioned for identifying and categorizing this manpower were Councils of Defense at the state level. Such state Councils would be appointed by governors and thereby have the authority over state citizens, connections to local interest groups and other elements of organized society that could be leveraged, and they would possess the knowledge and political legitimacy to compel such a registration. The Council structure was born from the federalist element of the American associational state, while also recognizing the necessity and value of integrating private organized society into the registration.

Once the registration was complete, the Council of National Defense and other federal organizations envisioned controlling the process and managing the men and women classified within “their line of work.”⁹⁴ These lines of work included publicity, war loans and investments, relief of draftees and their families, women’s home industries, industrial manpower, food production and preservation, and the management of work by boys and girls – the core elements of the committees that would come to dominate mobilization work during the war. The bold opening proposition by the Council of National Defense set the stage for how the states would establish their Councils and integrate them into an overall system, but a holistic registration of American citizens would be contested immediately by the state representatives.

The preliminary memorandum foreshadowed the program of the conference itself, its focus on each department’s challenges, and its lack of detailed guidance for the states. Secretary of War Baker opened the conference in his office on 2 May 1917, stating that, “The task upon which we have started is so large that no language is adequate to describe the extent of the work.” He also recognized that the strength of the effort would depend on the organization of the states

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 34.

supported by “general direction [from] Washington.”⁹⁵ The remainder of Baker’s remarks focused on military manpower, given the immediacy of the impending conscription effort. Congress had expanded the authorized end strength of the Army in 1916, but it still needed thousands more sailors and soldiers to bring them to full strength. The shortage of military manpower was compounded by the knowledge of the vast amount of death and injuries occurring in France, pushing the United States to develop a plan for military units larger than their British and French counterparts, requiring more soldiers than were volunteering for service. Pending legislation also promised to open the opportunity for an additional six-hundred thousand more volunteers, in addition to a registration and selective conscription of over a half-million more men. Baker beseeched the participants in the conference to encourage men to volunteer for the Regular Army and National Guard, as well as prepare their states for a national registration day for conscription. In order to prevent any negative reputations attached to the men conscripted for service, as had occurred in the past, and recognizing the importance of generating the consent of the men and families affected by the draft, Baker asked the state representatives at the conference to “contribute to make this registration a great and memorable occasion in our country’s history” and ensure that “every man who is putting his name down is making an acceptable sacrifice.”⁹⁶ He left the details of the draft, and ways in which the states could support it, to the speakers that followed him, including the Army Chief of Staff General Hugh Scott, Army Adjutant General H.P. McCain, and the primary implementer of the draft, Provost Marshal General Enoch Crowder. These speakers were relatively vague in their comments as they struggled to integrate

⁹⁵ Rexford L. Holmes and the U.S. Council of National Defense, “National Defense Conference Held Under the Auspices of the Council of National Defense, May 2 and 3, 1917,” Transcript of Proceedings, Washington, D.C., 1917, File 17-B.2, Box 1095, RG 62, NARA, 5. My most sincere thanks to Professor William J. Breen for providing me a mimeographed copy of the conference transcript and answers to state questions when COVID prevented me from conducting research at NARA for almost two years.

⁹⁶ Holmes, “National Defense Conference,” 11.

these representatives into their schemes for dramatic military manpower growth and increase the capability of the War Department.⁹⁷

Other Cabinet officials and staff members of the Council of National Defense, its Advisory Commission, and the Woman's Committee followed Baker and his military leaders in speaking to the assembled men.⁹⁸ Each speaker narrowly focused on their specific concerns relating to the imminent mobilization and the general importance of the states in the endeavor. These remarks were boiled down into a three-page list of items for the states to consider, though no coherent federal policy or scheme for organizing the vast amount of work before them was placed before the state representatives.⁹⁹

The conference provided little opportunity for state representatives to engage the participants and delve into the implications for individual states in mobilization. Pratt and his fellow participants eventually pushed the national Council to formally establish a Committee on Questions that collected queries from their fellow state representatives, provide those questions to the Council of National Defense for answer, and report back to the group.¹⁰⁰ The questions were as varied as the members attending and were ultimately not answered until the state representatives returned home.¹⁰¹

In the end, the conference did not provide the states with a coherent federal policy for home front mobilization, nor a defined role for the state Councils of Defense that Baker and the other members of the Council of National Defense were requesting they establish. The original intention of the national Council had been to use the states as a field force to identify and register

⁹⁷ Joseph Hyde Pratt, "Report on National Defense Conference to Gov Thomas Bickett, May 1917," Box 19, Folder 4, WWI 1, 3.

⁹⁸ Holmes, "National Defense Conference."

⁹⁹ Council of National Defense, "Preliminary Memoranda," 39-41; Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 9-14; Pratt "Report on National Defense Conference," 9-18.

¹⁰⁰ Holmes, "National Defense Conference," 211.

¹⁰¹ Council of National Defense, "Answers to Questions Submitted to the Council of National Defense on Behalf of the Governors and Their Representatives Attending the National Defense Conference Held in Washington, May 2 and 3," Box 2-C1, RG 62, NARA.

men and women for the coordination of manpower nationally, as outlined in the memorandum on “The National Service.” But the original agenda was swept to the side as Porter and the other national Council leaders struggled to even coordinate between their own federal agencies. Instead, Porter seized on the idea of the Council of National Defense, and the State Councils Section in particular, acting as a clearinghouse of information, loosely coordinating between the states to share best practices, as well as from the states to Washington to keep federal agencies informed.¹⁰² The representative of Pennsylvania, George W. Pepper, a staunch Republican and chair of the state Committee of Public Safety (their precursor version of a Council of Defense), attempted to force a motion at the very end of the conference to create a committee to oversee a national registration of volunteers.¹⁰³ Other state representatives in the room quickly objected, forcing the tabling of the issue. Not many state representatives appeared willing to commit to such a step, though some participants, including Pratt, shared ideas for managing labor, from students to convicts to state-wide exchanges that could “take and keep up a continuous census” of labor in the state.¹⁰⁴ Further discussion of such measures would wait until after states organized their mobilization systems.

While the conference failed to provide a clear policy for states to follow for mobilization, the leadership of federal departments and agencies came away from the conference viewing the state Councils of Defense as the focal point for all mobilization work in the states, at least initially. Additionally, these Councils would be tools of the national government to direct “the resources of the state in men and materials, to make them available and effective for national use” and, at least in the mind of Porter and his Section, “in the manner and form prescribed by the

¹⁰² Holmes, “National Defense Conference,” 236-248.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 241-248.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 70-74, 248-250.

National Council.”¹⁰⁵ While this seemed to mean that the work by the state Councils would be largely supplementary to the efforts of federal departments, much of the actual work on the ground to organize public and private efforts and increase the resources of the state for the use of the federal government would be done by the states themselves.¹⁰⁶

By the end of the conference, Porter shared with the state representatives a basic organizational scheme to standardize the formation of state Councils of Defense. The form he provided was functional, recommending committees for the major areas in which the state Councils would work, the perceived purpose of the Council of National Defense itself as a channel of communication, and the vague requirements each federal department voiced over the recent days of the conference. Composed of thirteen committees, they fell into two main categories: internal administration and issues for mobilization. Designed by professional managers like Porter, the Council worked in “a business-like way,” requiring men dedicated to administrative tasks like finance, publicity, and legal matters.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, a committee would manage subordinate organizations at the county and local levels. Committees also needed to address core mobilization efforts like military affairs, civil protection, manpower, food, industry, labor, transportation, health, and the coordination of civil societies.¹⁰⁸ A separate committee for woman’s work was not present on the original shared organizational scheme, though that would be an additional requirement laid upon the state representatives on the last day of the conference by the chair of the national Woman’s Committee, Dr. Anna Howard Shaw.¹⁰⁹

The American associational state of the early twentieth century underpinned the proposed structure for state Councils of Defense and their organization into a Council of Defense System

¹⁰⁵ Council of National Defense, “Memorandum of State Organization for War,” Folder 2, Box 19, WWI 1, 1.

¹⁰⁶ Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 14.

¹⁰⁷ Holmes, “National Defense Conference,” 239; Council of National Defense, “Memorandum of State Organization for War,” 1-3.

¹⁰⁸ Council of National Defense, “Memorandum of State Organization for War,” 2-3.

¹⁰⁹ Holmes, “National Defense Conference,” 226-229; Pratt “Report on National Defense Conference,” 12.

managed by the Council of National Defense. First, Baker and Porter recognized and built upon the traditional structure of federalism created in the American Constitution and subsequent national and state legislation. According to this system, the federal government had limited power in the states. Instead, the federal government depended on its moral example and the generation of voluntary support, a foundational reason for the increasing use of the “rhetorical presidency” by charismatic leaders like Theodore Roosevelt and President Wilson.¹¹⁰ When it came to enforcing their desires, the federal government relied on the states to use their powers to coerce and police their citizens.¹¹¹ Therefore, the federal government had to rely upon each state to develop its own approach to mobilizing its people to support the war, as well as integrate the infrastructural power provided by groups in the state’s organized society. Within the Council of Defense System, the Council of National Defense could only provide direction and advice, though they tried to instill their ideas of best practices in the states’ actions, including the most effective forms of organization down to the county and local levels.¹¹² Whether and where the state Councils undertook programs or ideas shared by the national Council depended on the preferences and capabilities of the leadership within each state.

The associational order also provided the state Councils the ability to integrate private enterprises and interest groups into the mobilization structure. The American system of governance had long relied upon the services and support such private entities, such as businesses, universities, professional associations, fraternal organizations, and women’s clubs,

¹¹⁰ See footnote 21 in this chapter for more on the rhetorical presidency.

¹¹¹ Gerstle, *Liberty and Coercion*, 1-2.

¹¹² Though I am still looking for a direct link, it is possible that the county-based Council of Defense System came from Secretary of War Baker based on his previous experience as the mayor of Cleveland prior to joining the federal government. In that previous job, it is likely that as a Progressive mayor who dedicated much of his time in office toward rationalization and the increase of efficiency in government, he encountered plans for managing social welfare piloted by Leroy A. Halbert in Kansas, which he called the “county unit” plan and was a scaling up of work he had done at the city level. See Anna L. Krome-Lukens, “The Reform Imagination: Gender, Eugenics, and the Welfare State in North Carolina, 1900-1940,” PhD diss. (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina, 2014), 28, 156-158.

could provide to increase their capability to meet public needs. Public-private enterprise would be even more critical to the mobilization for the First World War as the state sought to generate consent for war aims and conscription, increase the federal and state governments' capabilities to grow the military and expand the resources needed for the war, and control society during the chaotic wartime period. By pushing the integration of organized society into mobilization activities to the state level, the national Council recognized the ability of states to "reach down into each community and mobilize mass support for government programs far more effectively than any federal bureaucracy," according to historian William Breen.¹¹³

However, placing the Council of Defense System along associational lines also meant that mobilization would be filtered through different socio-political lenses according to "local realities."¹¹⁴ Decentralization allowed local elites to manage activities according to their own preferences, weaving in disparate ideas on class, gender, and race that, while helping to create "greater social efficiency" as seen at the national level, also reinforced negative hierarchical structures like those seen in the Jim Crow South.¹¹⁵ Because of this, mobilization activities were filtered and fragmented along class, gender, and racial lines, as will be seen in later chapters of this dissertation.

Upon his return to North Carolina, Joseph Hyde Pratt provided Governor Bickett a report which condensed the key issues discussed by the various federal organizations present at the conference, as well as the preparation material the Council of National Defense sent representatives before the event. Pratt did not provide any substantive context or analysis for the Governor to consider. But he did recommend the establishment of a state Council along the lines

¹¹³ Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, xvi.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, xvii.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, xvi.

of what the National Council recommended, adding committees for women's work, research, historical records, and an executive committee to oversee the organizational structure.¹¹⁶

The formation of a state Council of Defense was delayed by the more immediate requirements of preparing for nation-wide military conscription. Passed by Congress on 18 May 1917, the Selective Service Act required all male citizens in the United States between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-one to register on 5 June 1917 for possible induction into the Army.¹¹⁷ Though tentative, the groundwork for such a significant endeavor, particularly one that was historically contentious and could sour the American public's support for the war, was laid in mid-April. Anticipating passage of their requested legislation in Congress, the War Department provided governors and state adjutants general detailed instructions on the establishment of a registration system.¹¹⁸ Despite this, the initial push to appoint hundreds of registration boards in North Carolina and educate them in the regulations and processes necessary to prepare for conscription consumed Bickett's attention until late in May.¹¹⁹

In the interim, Pratt personally filled the role of a one-person state Council of Defense. He fielded queries from the Council of National Defense, began integrating members of organized civil society that indicated interest in the war effort, wrote proclamations for the Governor to encourage North Carolinians to volunteer for the National Guard, and supported

¹¹⁶ Pratt "Report on National Defense Conference."

¹¹⁷ United States, Congress, An Act to Authorize the President to Increase Temporarily the Military Establishment of the United States, 18 May 1917, Public Law 65-12, 40 Stat. 76, Government Printing Office, 1917, 64th Congress, 2nd Session, <https://govtrackus.s3.amazonaws.com/legislink/pdf/stat/40/STATUTE-40-Pg76.pdf>, accessed 14 Jan 2022.

¹¹⁸ U.S. War Department, Office of the Provost Marshal General, "Report of the Provost Marshal General to the Secretary of War on the First Draft under the Selective-Service Act, 1917," pages 7-9, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries, <http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b219-i272>, accessed 14 Jan 2022 (hereafter Du Bois Papers); Baker to Bickett, 23 Apr 1917, Folder 4, G.P. 369; Baker to Bickett, 2 May 1917, Folder 5, G.P. 369.

¹¹⁹ Bickett to County Sheriffs, Clerks, and Physicians, 19 May 1917, Folder 5, G.P. 369.

Bickett by coordinating with local individuals in preparations for Registration Day.¹²⁰ By the end of May, however, Pratt convinced Bickett to bring together select political elites of the state to form a proper state Council of Defense, meeting in Raleigh on 31 May 1917.¹²¹ The eleven white individuals, ten men and one woman, selected by Bickett for wartime service on the state Council of Defense represented the social and political elite of the state and came from both inside and outside of government. This composition was born of the associational order in North Carolina and leveraged its nature to integrate all elements, public and private, in directing mobilization. State Council members were also drawn largely from the “progressive plutocracy” from which Bickett himself hailed and who had a long-running, symbiotic relationship with state government.¹²² While generating wealth through the support of the state, these individuals also provided financial, materiel, services, and employment opportunities to the people of North Carolina. As will be seen throughout the war, Bickett’s strategic choices as to whom he appointed solidified the economic, social, and political hierarchies in the state, a dynamic seen across state Councils of Defense.¹²³ The men Bickett appointed to the Council included the Durham manufacturer and financier, George W. Watts; life insurance executive from Greensboro, C. Collins Taylor; Charlotte engineer and founder of the Southern Power Company, William S. Lee; Wake County financier and former House representative, Robert N. Page; Asheville manufacturer and owner of Biltmore Industries, Fred L. Seely; professor at UNC-Chapel Hill, George Howe; and the former president of the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs, Laura Holmes

¹²⁰ Wilson to Pratt, 7 May 1917, Pratt to Beale, 10 May 1917, Press Notice No. 69, “The Day and Its Duties: An Appeal by the Governor,” 26 May 1917, Baker to Pratt, 26 May 1917, and Pratt to Marsh, 29 May 1917, Folder 7, Box 19, WWI 1.

¹²¹ Raleigh *News and Observer*, 27 May 1917, and Hill commission to chair the North Carolina Council of Defense, 26 May 1917, Folder 3, Box 94.5, Daniel Harvey Hill, Jr. (1859-1924) Papers, 1808-1967, Private Collections, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C. (hereafter P.C. 94).

¹²² V.O. Key, Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York, N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), 205–6.

¹²³ Brownell, “The Women’s Committees of the First World War,” 27; Emma Teitelman, “Class and State in the Era of Reconstruction,” presentation, Organization of American Historians Annual Conference, Public–Private Governance in U.S. History Panel, 18 Apr 2021.

Reilley. Childhood friend of Woodrow Wilson and Wilmington cotton exporter, James Sprunt, was also appointed to the Council, but could not attend the initial meeting due to poor health.¹²⁴ Finally, three state employees were Council members and present at the initial meeting; Secretary of State J. Bryan Grimes, Pratt, and a historian on the North Carolina Historical Commission, Daniel Harvey Hill, Jr.¹²⁵

Hill was voted the chair of the state Council of Defense and was joined by Grimes, Pratt, Watts, and Page on the executive council. Additionally, William S. Wilson, the North Carolina Legislative Reference Librarian, was named the state secretary, and Benjamin R. Lacy, state treasurer, became the Council's treasurer. The remainder of the Council's initial meeting focused on organizing a state structure for mobilization. The group established various committees based around types of work, named recommendations for committee chairs, and selected possible chairs of county Councils, a little over half of whom would end up serving in those positions during the war.¹²⁶

Three issues of concern appeared at the first meeting. For one, the Council members recognized their endeavors would require financing, though there was disagreement on how much they needed and where they would acquire the funding. To determine budgetary requirements for the Council and how they might raise the money, they created a small finance committee.¹²⁷ Believing the Council would likely require relatively minor amounts of money to function, the committee decided to raise funds through donations, or "subscriptions," leveraging their ties to

¹²⁴ James Sprunt, unpublished family history, pp. 25, 36, Folder 1, James Sprunt Family Files, Lower Cape Fear Historical Society, Wilmington, N.C.

¹²⁵ North Carolina Council of Defense, Meeting Notes, 31 May 1917, Folder 13, Box 13, WWI 1.

¹²⁶ Ibid. The calculation also comes from a database of more than two thousand individuals who participated in North Carolina's war effort, compiled by James S. Bissett and refined by the author based upon the World War I papers in the State Archive. The author owes a great debt of gratitude to Professor Bissett for sharing his work.

¹²⁷ North Carolina Council of Defense, Meeting Notes, 31 May 1917, WWI 1.

other state economic and political elites, in addition to themselves.¹²⁸ Private sector financial assistance again reinforced the associational nature of the Council, placing individuals and interest groups as the primary suppliers of material resources.

The second issue before the Council was the procurement and placement of new military camps. Since mid-May, Bickett had unsuccessfully lobbied General Leonard Wood, the military's Southern Department commander, to place military camps in North Carolina to mobilize and train National Guard and drafted soldiers.¹²⁹ The Council agreed to again engage Wood, "urging that three sites in North Carolina be selected for these cantonments."¹³⁰ Subsequent communications with Wood used the Council's formation as evidence that they could support the large and chaotic task that would attend the establishment and support of the new camps.¹³¹ Ultimately, the War Department would agree to three camps in the state, placing them near Charlotte, Fayetteville, and Raleigh.¹³²

The final issue with which the state Council contended during its first meeting was the definition of the exact powers of the organization. Created a few months after the state's General Assembly had concluded their business, and which would not to be taken back up until January 1919, the Council of Defense had "no power or authority with respect to the enforcement of its

¹²⁸ Sixty-three individuals ended up providing funds, from \$5 to \$300 each, with the median subscription being \$100. The total amount raised from May 1917 to Nov 1918 was just over \$6,500, \$5,400 of which was spent, mostly on clerical work, printing, and postage. The remainder of the funds were ultimately donated to a memorial fund. Uncounted was the significant amount of travel and individual correspondence costs that all mementos of the state Council of Defense paid themselves. See Pratt, "History of the North Carolina Council of Defense," 547-553.

¹²⁹ Bickett to Simmons, Overman, and Wood, 19 May 1917, and Wood to Bickett, 21 May 1917, Folder 5, G.P. 369.

¹³⁰ North Carolina Council of Defense, Meeting Notes, 31 May 1917, Folder 13, Box 13, WWI 1.

¹³¹ Hill and Bickett to Wood, 1 June 1917, Folder 1, G.P. 370.

¹³² Camp Greene, Camp Bragg, and Camp Polk, respectively. Greene would be the largest camp in the state and focused on mobilization and infantry training of National Guard forces and then draftees. Bragg was established as a training site for field artillery late in the war. Polk was placed on the large, open Raleigh fair grounds and trained soldiers in the employment of the newly developed armored tanks.

demands or requests.”¹³³ To address this, Hill agreed to approach both Bickett and the Council of National Defense to ascertain how each might delegate state or federal executive power for their work.¹³⁴ The lack of defined power, authorities, and funding would be a constant challenge for the state Council, requiring Hill and the other members to rely upon the soft power of request, encouragement, pleading, and if required, referral of issues to the Governor and other departments of the state executive branch to generate consent and support from North Carolinians.

It is unclear why Bickett, with the support of fellow Council of Defense member Grimes and the rest of the Council of State, did not call a special session of the General Assembly after the declaration of war in 1917 to address the financial and authority requirements identified for state-wide mobilization.¹³⁵ The vast majority of the General Assembly were fellow Democrats who recently supported his Progressive agenda, though their support for the war is unclear, as few elected members are identified as participants in any mobilization activities.¹³⁶ It is possible that the other elected members of the Council of State, aside from Bickett and Grimes, would not have supported a special session, or that Bickett felt they possessed enough authority in the state executive departments, supplemented with volunteers, that they could perform the necessary mobilization activities.

The North Carolina Council of Defense was not provided authority or funds from the Council of National Defense. A mere coordinating body for disparate federal agencies, the

¹³³ North Carolina Council of Defense, Meeting Notes, 31 May 1917, Folder 13, Box 13, WWI 1.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ The General Assembly did not meet again until January 1919, long after the armistice with Germany and as the state Council of Defense was already wrapping up its work. The calling of special sessions of the General Assembly was not unheard of before or after the war, having been called in 1908, 1913, and 1920, communication with Anthony Aycok, North Carolina Legislative Librarian, 17 Feb 2021; Fleer, *North Carolina Government and Politics*, 71, 111; North Carolina, Constitution of 1868, Article III, [https://www.ncleg.gov/documentsites/legislativepublications/Constitutions/NCCConstitution%20\(1868\).pdf](https://www.ncleg.gov/documentsites/legislativepublications/Constitutions/NCCConstitution%20(1868).pdf), accessed 14 Jan 2022.

¹³⁶ R.D.W. Connor, ed., *North Carolina Manual* (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1917), 17, 33-36

national Council, as well as its State Councils Section that provided the states entry into national efforts, had no authorities to delegate, as it was merely a conduit for information, “designed primarily to guard and to energize public morale,” according to William Breen.¹³⁷

Because the North Carolina Council of Defense was bereft of legislatively provided authority at the state or national levels but charged with mobilizing the entire state for the war, it inhabited a position between the executive, legislative, and organized civil society of the state throughout the war. This position made the Council an exemplary embodiment of a state level intermediary institution of the wartime associational state.

Structuring Mobilization

The way North Carolina and its Council of Defense structured itself to conduct the mobilization illuminates its role in extending federal power in some areas, maintaining state sovereignty in others, and integrating private groups and individuals into the war effort. The North Carolina Council of Defense organized itself to work along three different tracks. First, the state Council was organized along a hierarchical track that included the Council of National Defense as a source of information and federal requirements, the state Council that directed work in the state based upon a negotiation between federal guidance and the interests of state leadership, and the county and local Councils that executed much of the work by mobilizing local leaders, organized interest groups, and individuals.

Second, the state Council of Defense organized itself into committees that would each tackle core functions of the wartime mobilization anticipated by the Council members. These committees broadly matched the structure the Council of National Defense recommended at the 2-3 May 1917 conference of states in Washington, though the North Carolina Council added the

¹³⁷ Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 199.

committees on historical preservation, research, and women's work which Pratt originally recommended to Bickett. Skeptical of the universal registration of workers envisioned by the national Council in their memorandum "The National Service," the North Carolina Council did not create a committee to conduct a survey of manpower in the state.¹³⁸ These changes occurred due to shifting conditions after the conference, including the War Department's desire to avoid confusion around the upcoming draft registration.¹³⁹ Additionally, the integration of women into state mobilization took on increased importance as the national Woman's Committee quickly organized and named representatives in the states.¹⁴⁰ Finally, as a state that credited much of its post-Civil War achievements to academic and historical study, North Carolina recognized the importance of capturing and documenting the momentous events of the war.

The impact, sustainability, and success of the fourteen functional committees initially established by the North Carolina Council of Defense were variable. Those committees that were politically or socially important to the leaders of the state, possessed strong leadership, or were positioned to coordinate key aspects of state mobilization grew over the course of the war. They ultimately directed similar committees at the county and local level, as well as tapped into federal agencies or programs that could support their work. Interested in generating consent and support of North Carolinians for the war, the Public Information and Legal Committees were provided robust support from the state Council of Defense. The committee on Public Information gathered information from the Council of National Defense, tied into George Creel's Committee of Public Information in Washington, published pamphlets and seeded newspaper stories about mobilization activities, and coordinated speakers across the state to ensure citizens knew the

¹³⁸ North Carolina Council of Defense, *Plan of Organization*, 12-15; Holmes, "National Defense Conference," 257-260

¹³⁹ Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 11-13.

¹⁴⁰ Brownell, "The Women's Committees of the First World War," 21. Brownell identifies that the state level woman's committees were where the actual mobilization work was done. This is also supported by Breen, "Southern Women in the War," who also identifies the woman's committees as more organized than the men's committees.

reasons for war and how they could support it. The Legal Committee broadly shared the requirements of legislation like the Selective Service Act, ensured lawyers across the state were prepared to support conscripted soldiers and their families at no cost, and stood up external Business Aid Committees that would oversee soldiers' business concerns until they returned from the war. James Pou, a member of the Legal Committee and the progenitor of the Business Aid Committee idea, understood that, "As thousands of soldiers and sailors were to leave their business for an indefinite period, it was seen that a committee of lawyers and business men [sic] in each county could render these departing men many legal and business services...drawn wills, transferred property, filled out power of attorney papers, arranged for soldiers to vote—in short, whatever a soldier or sailor asked, they have done. They have also assisted the families of those who needed help."¹⁴¹ Legal and business aid support will be covered in more detail in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, which looks at military mobilization in the state.

The committees for Conservation and Economy, Health and Sanitation, and Industrial Survey were the best positioned to coordinate important aspects of the mobilization. Focused on food conservation and production, the Conservation and Economy committee used the state's previously-established Commission on Food Conservation to address agricultural needs in the state, eventually integrating into the state's office supporting the federal Food Administration.¹⁴² The Health and Sanitation committee focused largely on these factors as they related to military camps established in North Carolina, working toward both physical and moral cleanliness of the camps by supporting the Commission on Training Camp Activities, as well as ensuring as minimal an impact as possible on local communities surrounding the camps. The Industrial Survey committee initially worked toward the integration of business and industry in the state

¹⁴¹ North Carolina Council of Defense, *First Annual Report of the North Carolina Council of Defense, 1918* (Raleigh, N.C.: Commercial Printing Company, 1918), 6. I cover the Legal Committee and the Business Aid Committees in more depth in Chapter 2.

¹⁴² Food administration is addressed in Chapter 3.

into the overall national mobilization. Their work included the survey of potential facilities for manufacturing munitions in the state, the construction of training cantonments, and ensuring the safety and sanitary work of laborers in the shipyards in the state.¹⁴³ The role of the state Council in food, fuel, and labor issues during the war is covered in Chapter 3.

The state Woman's Committee had strong leadership and a dedicated pool of women to push their work during the war, allowing them to organize around areas they felt important to the women of the state. The integration of women into mobilization, as well as the failure to integrate African Americans, is the topic of Chapters 4 and 5 of this dissertation. Many of the other committees, less important to state leadership or imperfect for the unfolding mobilization, withered over time. However, the innovative nature of the Council of Defense System adapted to fill the gaps required by mobilization, cutting loose the aspects that were less useful. The nature of this functional track integrated elements of mobilization that were not inherent in the geographic structure of the Council of Defense System.¹⁴⁴ Its power was an integration of extant political and geographic organization with the functional necessities of wartime mobilization.

The third track for organization was a more loose, organic affair focused on the integration of public and private entities at state and county levels needed for the mobilization. While ostensibly integrated into the functional track through the Committee for Coordination Work, which was "to secure the utmost unity and harmony of effort so as to prevent all overlapping or repeated effort [and] formulate plans for a welded organization," the entire Council of Defense System in the state was needed to integrate the diverse actors and purposes of

¹⁴³ Fred Olds, "General Records: War Industries in NC," Folder 3, Box 1, WWI 4, Military Collections, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C.

¹⁴⁴ This geographical nature of the Council of Defense System, versus a more modern functional orientation, is one of the critiques of its weaknesses according to some scholars, such as Kennedy, *Over Here*, 116-117. The functional nature of the committees, I argue, pushes back on this critique, as it synchronized local and state efforts in the required functional spaces for mobilization.

North Carolina's interest groups and organized society into the mobilization.¹⁴⁵ One committee was unable to manage the integration of associational elements alone. It became the job of the entirety of the North Carolina Council of Defense to manage the integration of public and private efforts throughout the state, a fact that was apparent almost immediately and across the functions for mobilization.

The integration of public and private enterprise and organized society into mobilization included the linking of the Council of Defense to the registration and exemption boards for conscription, the organization of lawyers and businessmen to support mobilizing troops and their families, the coordination with relief agencies like the Red Cross and Y.M.C.A., and the management of private, state, and federal efforts around food conservation and production, fuel conservation, and the raising of funds through Liberty Loans and War Stamps. The North Carolina Council of Defense certainly exercised and enhanced its power through the integration of these private organizations. However, it also shaped how such organizations arranged themselves, shaping private enterprise and civil society in the process.¹⁴⁶ The interactive and symbiotic evolution of public and private entities in support of the war is covered in more depth over the following four chapters, which directly address North Carolina's efforts to increase its capabilities to mobilize its military and resources while also controlling the ability of state citizens to contest the state's socio-political system.

The three-track structuring of the North Carolina Council of Defense reflected its position as an intermediary institution managing the associational state in wartime. It extended federal power by channeling desires and requirements from the Council of National Defense down to local leadership and through functional committee work. Additionally, for the federal agencies looking to organize war work in North Carolina, the state Council of Defense became a

¹⁴⁵ North Carolina Council of Defense, *Plan of Organization*, 6.

¹⁴⁶ Ideas generated in conversation with Dr. Emma Teitelman, 28 Apr 2021.

foundation for infrastructure and logistics in the state – a mechanism for generating support and a base for organized manpower toward their ends. The state Council also structured work around the issues most important to its elite members, largely through the committee system, but also through the private entities it chose to integrate into mobilization. In this latter way, the state Council acted as a gatekeeper, managing politically and socially volatile issues around class, gender, and race, while also focusing on key economic priorities of the North Carolina progressive plutocracy, such as agriculture, the textile industry, and trade.¹⁴⁷ While members of the state Council did not agree on every issue, leading to contention over issues like the formation of a Home Guard to manage fears of racial conflict and Vigilance Committees to use coercive force to manage loyalty in the state, overall state mobilization policy was set through consensus among Council members, backstopped by the direction of Governor Bickett as the chief executive of the state.¹⁴⁸

Conclusion

The organization and expansion of the Council of Defense System in North Carolina began slowly. Governor Bickett did not form a state Council for over a month following the declaration of war with Germany in April 1917. Additionally, Council Chair D.H. Hill and Woman’s Committee Chair Laura Reilley struggled at first to get commitments from men and women across the state to form county Councils of Defense and join their committees, hampering the organization of volunteer labor and the integration of organized society into mobilization

¹⁴⁷ From the federal government perspective, these types of issues resulted in a lack of imagination or energy in North Carolina Council of Defense, making it more of “the country store type,” as Frederick Allen wrote in his history; Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 97. However, this had more to do with conflicting views of activities between Washington and Raleigh than actual capability or work completed.

¹⁴⁸ Wilson to Lewis, 10 Jul 1917, Folder 3, Box 2, WWI 1; Hill to McCormick, 2 Feb 1918, Folder 27, Box 9, WWI 2.

efforts.¹⁴⁹ Additionally, despite general consensus on most issues facing North Carolina, not all members of the state Council – or indeed their subordinate county Councils – agreed on everything, resulting in delays in key areas, such as how to deal with labor, African Americans wishing to support state mobilization, and the activities that would be open to women’s participation. Such friction points will be addressed in subsequent chapters. Still, by the first few months of 1918 the state had firmly established all three elements of its structure – the hierarchical, functional, and public-private tracks – in all its 100 counties, and leaders were actively managing all elements of mobilization activities. Though not as efficient or even as effective as it might have been looking from the benefit of hindsight, the North Carolina Council of Defense was able to generate broad consensus among its members and proved ultimately successful in integrating public entities and organized society to achieve the goals of the national and state governments during the war. As will be detailed in subsequent chapters, the Council was instrumental in generating the consent, increasing the capability, and establishing the control required to dramatically expand the nation’s military manpower, conserve and produce additional food, fuel, and labor to support the war effort and those serving on the home front, and manage the chaotic socio-political environment of the nation in wartime. Such efforts included the Council’s management to register almost 500,000 of the nation’s 24 million men for military service, conscript over 55,000 of the 2.8 million men nationally inducted for service, and provide almost 80,000 of the 4.8 million men that ended up serving during the war. The Council also increased state production of foodstuffs significantly enough to refrain from buying wheat, barley, and corn outside the state, established dozens of labor exchanges in the state to match workers to jobs, and increased skilled labor opportunities in the state by securing contracts to build transportation ships, manufacture munitions, and provide equipment and clothing to

¹⁴⁹ See letters to North Carolinians in various counties, Folder 1, Box 2, WWI 1 and Folder 7, Box 17, WWI 1.

soldiers. This extensive support to the war was in stark contrast to concerns and contestation of preparedness in the years before the United States entered the war; it was evidence of a robust statewide effort focused on consent, capability, and control.

The North Carolina Council of Defense was committed to maintaining the socio-political order based in patriarchal white supremacy throughout the war. As Chapters 4 and 5 will detail, the Council circumscribed many mobilization tasks for women, while rejecting any meaningful integration of African Americans at all. Both decisions, developed over the evolution of the Council and reiterated time and again, even against federal government pushback, were designed to keep both women and African Americans in subordinate positions socially and politically. While the mobilization for the First World War held the promise of emancipation in many people's minds, in many parts of the country, including North Carolina, the pre-war inequalities experienced by women and African Americans were sustained during and following the conflict. One reason for this was the intermediary nature, chosen structure, and selected activities of the North Carolina Council of Defense, which inhibited and constrained the deliberate and diligent efforts of both communities to actively support mobilization activities. There was no shortage of active support from women or Black citizens in the state – the state Council just channeled or restrained its effective integration into overall state efforts, decreasing their effect overall, exercising excessive control at the expense of additional increased capacity for mobilization.

The structure of the North Carolina Council of Defense and the activities it managed throughout the war extended to the local level of the American associational state, which relied upon a decentralized federalist system and the extension of both federal and state power through the provision of services and support by private organizations within organized society. The Council's position between the federal government and the people of North Carolina, and between organized society and governmental entities, gave it a key intermediary role in

integrating public and private efforts at the state level to generate consent, increase mobilization capability, and institute control for a nation-wide mobilization effort.

The state Council exemplified how the associational state functioned in action to increase voluntary manpower for mobilization by generating consent and support, expanded the capacity of the federal effort through the execution of programs that could be scaled up to the national level, while also inhibiting federal power and the inclusion of some citizens in mobilization activities by controlling what actions the state employed and who could participate. The result of creating a state Council of Defense that linked to national and local efforts was a flexible system that evolved as the federal government, state government, and organized society negotiated their requirements and preferences.

Prone to exaggeration and overly positive exhortation as governor, Bickett was fulsome in his praise of North Carolina's wartime efforts after the war. Speaking at the first convening of the state's General Assembly since before the war and mere months after an Armistice was declared with Germany, Bickett stated that "All the moral and spiritual forces of the State were mobilized in magnificent array. Before their resolute advance no slackerism could stand, and in their shining presence no selfish thought could." Success in the state was because of the diligent work of men and women in both the public and private sectors, coordinated by the state Council of Defense, whose members acted as "the shock absorbers in the engine of war...[who] stood between the Government and the people and got hard kicks from both. Their's was the hardest, most thankless, and, at the same time, the most necessary work of the war." According to their governor, "They did it miraculously well."¹⁵⁰ The following chapters address key areas of North Carolina's work in turn, describing the mobilization of the state from 1917 through 1919 and the role of the Council of Defense in coordinating the associational state in wartime.

¹⁵⁰ Thomas W. Bickett, "Message of Governor T.W. Bickett to the General Assembly of 1919," pamphlet, page 4, Folder 1, G.P. 380.

Chapter 2:

“Thrown into the Most Merciless War Ever Waged”: The North Carolina Council of Defense & Military Mobilization for the First World War¹

“Another chapter in the State's Record Book of immortal deeds has been written,” proclaimed Brigadier General Beverly S. Royster a month after the armistice was signed with Germany in November 1918. The perpetual Adjutant General of North Carolina, having served off and on in the position since 1898, Royster expanded such praise beyond the men that crossed the Atlantic and fought in France. For while “our boys were doing and daring and dying ‘over there,’” he wrote, “our boys in the Training Camps, Officers’ Schools, and Students’ Army Training Corps were rendering an equally patriotic, necessary and honorable service.” Royster’s praise also applied equally to the numerous military and civilian personnel that ran the Selective Service System in the state, built and managed the three training camps, and integrated organized society into military mobilization activities. According to the state’s Adjutant General, “There is glory enough for them all.”²

The unprecedented scale of the mobilization of military manpower was North Carolina’s first major challenge in support of America’s entry into the First World War. After mid-May 1917, the state was required by law to support a national conscription under the Selective Service Act. This law would require not only the young men of North Carolina to register and possibly enter the military for the war, but also require the state to establish a sprawling, multi-layer system of boards to choose which men were chosen for service and ensure they entered training.

¹ North Carolina Council of Defense, *Plan of Organization* (Raleigh, N.C.: Commercial Printing Company, 1917), 11.

² North Carolina Adjutant General’s Office, *Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the State of North Carolina, 1917-1918* (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards & Broughton Printing Co., 1920), 5.

For that reason, military mobilization was an aspect of the war that impacted all American society, down to the individual family level. It was also a key element of America's associational state in war time, integrating efforts that included governmental organizations from the national to the local level, and employed individuals and interest groups from organized society. How the military mobilization was structured, the capacity and capability it provided to national and state governments, and the politics of inclusion and exclusion that directly impacted the outcomes of the mobilization detail the dynamic nature of the associational state during the war.

At the heart of the state's military mobilization stood the North Carolina Council of Defense, which, according to its chair, Daniel H. Hill, Jr., "tried to take a hand in everything that was going on and to initiate all that we could."³ Such efforts included support to deploying state National Guard forces and their families, building the state's Selective Service System and selecting individuals to register and draft men into the National Army, establishing training bases, and creating measures of control to constrain both federal overreach and threats to the state's white supremacist socio-political order. The state Council of Defense accomplished this even though, as captured by Hill, the "Council...ha[d] no legal authority, except its appointment by the Governor."⁴ From late May 1917 to the end of the war in November of 1918, the state Council generated the consent from its citizens, increased the capability to organize its people and resources, and established the control necessary to address the needs of a national military mobilization.

As described in the previous chapter, the formation of a Council of Defense System was an extension of the dual elements of an American associational state – a federalist system requiring the decentralization of mobilization activities to the states, and the integration of elements of organized society to provide core services and capabilities government could not.

³ Hill to Pate, 3 May 1918, Folder 4, Box 3, WWI 1.

⁴ Ibid.

Leveraging the associational order to organize mobilization led to a decentralized, loose institutional structure that could increase infrastructural power and through it increase the capacity and capability of the national state to expand the military for war. In North Carolina, the state Council of Defense was the key organization expanding the power of the national government down to the local level. The Council was also instrumental in controlling the state's participation by determining who could take part in the process of military mobilization, as well as shaping how federal requirements were executed.

This chapter argues that the North Carolina Council of Defense acted as the primary intermediary institution for military mobilization in the state. Drawing on its relationship to the Governor, incorporating state executive departments into its structure, and integrating organized society into mobilization activities, the Council increased military capacity and capability to meet the national requirements for the First World War. Capacity in this context relates to the immediate ability to achieve a specific objective, such as recruiting men into service with the National Guard and bringing North Carolina units up to full strength. Capability addresses the potential for mobilization to achieve increased capacity or improvements in structure and ability. Increased capability was primarily seen in the expansion beyond extant military structures like the National Guard, such as the Selective Service System to draft new soldiers and the bases that supported their mobilization and training. The Council increased both state and national military mobilization capacity and capability over its tenure coordinating activities in the state.

A second argument is that the Council mediated, shaped, and ultimately controlled mobilization activities to address the concerns of state elites and their white constituents, ensuring the continuity of the state's Democrat-led white supremacist order. When directed toward generating consent among North Carolinians for military service and the support of soldiers and their families, the Council framed its activities in the language of patriotism. When addressing

challenges to military service or the white-led order in the state – including desertion, vagrancy, and the fear of race-based violence – the language shifted to focus on stability, order, and control. Council efforts to manage consent and ensure control were compounded by the integration of organized society into mobilization activities. Dominated by upper- and middle-class white men and women in the state, interest groups and associations in the state’s organized society further emphasized the politics of inclusion and exclusion inherent to early twentieth-century American society but heightened by North Carolina’s particular brand of southern Progressivism. While not inhibiting the dramatic expansion of the military for the war, such efforts by the North Carolina Council of Defense and the private organizations integrated into mobilization activities shaped multiple aspects of wartime work. Ultimately, the work of the Council influenced the composition of the forces provided for the war, retained the economic and political dominance of the white agricultural elite in the state, and ensured African Americans remained subordinate to white men during and following the war.

Finally, this chapter argues that because of the efforts of the North Carolina Council of Defense the state was successful at increasing national military capacity and capability to meet all national quotas for military manpower. It was also successful in maintaining support for the war while circumscribing certain populations from participating fully. While the limited integration of women and African Americans in mobilization activities circumscribed its scale, the mobilization nonetheless allowed North Carolina to provide the nation with sufficient military forces and maintain control of the mobilization with limited pushback. The men of the state Council clearly saw this as a success. Perceptions of success by the state was buttressed by national attention and the replication of some elements of North Carolina’s work by other Councils of Defense. In particular, the Council of National Defense encouraged other Councils to establish legal and business aid committees to support drafted soldiers, an idea first enacted by the Legal Committee

of the North Carolina Council of Defense. In another sign of success, the War Department recruited personnel in the state's Selective Service System to move to Washington, D.C. to manage the national effort.

This chapter falls into two main parts. The first part analyzes how the North Carolina Council of Defense structured state efforts to harness societal resources and translate them into national military power. Coordinating public and private organizations, the state Council increased the state's capacity and created the processes and physical infrastructure to expand its capability to provide the national state with military manpower. Such work led to North Carolinians serving overseas in National Guard units, the establishment of bases that mobilized and trained units from outside the state, and created an entirely novel system that supported the United States to register almost a quarter of the population in the country and induct 4 million of them for military service.

The second part addresses the social and political cleavages in North Carolina that drove the state Council's military mobilization efforts. To ensure the power of the extant political order of the state, the Council deliberately employed a politics of inclusion and exclusion. This approach determined who could participate in the classification and conscription of their fellow citizens, which men were conscripted into the military, and how the Council System managed challenges to the draft by delinquents and deserters. Together, these sections detail North Carolina's efforts to support a national military mobilization and the effects of local politics on the process.

Increasing Military Capacity and Capability

"It is believed that the citizens throughout the State will rally to the National Guard and that they will use their influence in advising the young men to serve," wrote Adjutant General

Royster to fellow members of the state and county Councils of Defense in late June 1917.⁵ North Carolina, like other states in the Union, was struggling to bring its National Guard to full strength in preparation for their organization, training, and deployment to the war in France. Royster, leveraging his position on the North Carolina Council of Defense to tap into both public and private organizational support, did not rely solely upon his own state military organization to fill out his units with the required five thousand new volunteers.⁶ He requested city mayors, county commissioners, the press, ministers, chambers of commerce, woman's groups, and even individual citizens to "come together and organize themselves in committees with the view of securing the necessary number of men."⁷

Prior to American entry into the war, North Carolina's National Guard was a mere four thousand men, composed of three infantry regiments and small units of cavalry, coast artillery, and medical personnel.⁸ Even this number was swollen compared to previous years thanks to increased recruitment in support of the War Department's federalization and deployment of the state's National Guard troops to the U.S.-Mexico border in June 1916. North Carolina's troops were deployed to protect the border as the Regular Army, led by future American Expeditionary Forces Commander General John J. Pershing, pushed into Mexico.⁹ Removed from combat

⁵ Royster to Councils of Defense, 25 June 1917, Folder 8, Box 19, WWI 1.

⁶ Royster to Officers of the North Carolina National Guard, undated, but likely immediately after Governor Bickett's 21 May 1917 Proclamation for National Guard recruiting, Folder 12, Box 6, WWI 3.

⁷ Royster to Councils of Defense, 25 June 1917, Folder 8, Box 19, WWI 1; Royster to Mayors of the Cities and Towns of North Carolina, 22 May 1917, Folder 12, Box 6, WWI 3.

⁸ North Carolina Adjutant General's Office, *Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the State of North Carolina, 1916* (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards & Broughton Printing Co., 1919), 118-121.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 7. This federalization and mobilization was the first to take place after the passing of the Dick Act in 1903 and the National Defense Act in 1916, both of which provided the federal government more oversight and control of state forces in return for federal funding and equipment. United States, Congress, Militia Efficiency Act, 21 Jan 1903, Public Law 57-33, 32 Stat. 775, 57th Congress, 2nd Session, https://congressional-proquest-com.proxy.lib.duke.edu/congressional/docview/t41.d42.57_pl_33_2?accountid=10598, accessed 21 Jan 2022; United States, Congress, National Defense Act, 3 Jun 1916, Public Law 64-85, 39 Statute 166, 64th Congress, 1st Session, https://congressional-proquest-com.proxy.lib.duke.edu/congressional/docview/t41.d42.64_pl_85?accountid=10598, accessed 21 Jan 2022;

action, North Carolina's forces spent their time in El Paso, Texas, helping refugees across the border as they fled from the fighting in Mexico.¹⁰

The large mobilization of North Carolina's forces provided significant lessons in the marshaling of its forces, equipping them with federally provided gear, and transporting them far from home.¹¹ They returned to North Carolina in March of 1917 a more capable force, backed by a more experienced mobilization organization led by Royster. After the declaration of war on Germany a mere month later, initial state mobilization activities were driven by Royster's push to expand his military forces through a rapid recruitment. Historically, only a few men in North Carolina had joined federal forces like the Regular Army or Marines. Additionally, state participation in the U.S. Navy was only accomplished through the federalization of the state's Naval Militia. North Carolinians were clear in their preference to serve alongside their neighbors and in support of their state, versus joining the more distant federal forces.¹² For that reason, the initial focus for wartime forces in North Carolina was the expansion of the National Guard.¹³ Royster played on local fears of losing connection to their state through federal service in the Regular Army – or even worse, by being drafted into a unit without any connection to friends, family, or home. Pushing his Guard recruitment into June and July, he encouraged young men to

Charles H. Harris and Louis R. Sadler, *The Great Call-Up: The Guard, the Border, and the Mexican Revolution* (Norman, O.K.: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015), 11-20.

¹⁰ North Carolina Adjutant General's Office, *Annual Report, 1916*, 9; John Van Bokkelen Metts Papers, WWI 62.

¹¹ General Royster oversaw the mobilization of the North Carolina National Guard for both the 1916 call-out and the First World War. In both cases, the Adjutant General had to undertake robust recruitment efforts with the state's Coast Artillery Corps because approximately 1/3 of mustered enlisted soldiers were deemed physically unfit, North Carolina Adjutant General's Office, *Annual Report, 1916*, 7, 118-121.

¹² Page to Hill, 17 Jun 1917, Box 2, WWI 1.

¹³ Royster to Bickett, 1 Jan 1919, Folder 1, G.P. 380; North Carolina Adjutant General's Office, "Statistical Report, 1927," Folder 8, A.G. 84.1, Adjutant General's Papers, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C. (hereafter A.G. 84); Sarah McCulloh Lemmon, *North Carolina's Role in the First World War* (Raleigh, N.C.: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1975), 52.

instead join the National Guard to “not only touch elbows with his boyhood friends, but [to] be commanded by officers of his native State.”¹⁴

Efforts to bring the state’s existing military forces to its wartime strength were challenged by War Department-mandated increases to the overall size of North Carolina’s National Guard units. On federal order, and at the insistence of Governor Bickett and the North Carolina Council of Defense, North Carolina added multiple new units that needed to be created from scratch, requiring an additional five thousand new Guard soldiers. The expansion doubled the state’s forces, increasing the potential capacity of North Carolina to contribute to overall national military power, while also improving its capabilities by adding artillery, machine gun, and engineer units to the force.¹⁵

Governor Bickett, Royster, and the state Council of Defense each worked to generate consent and support among state citizens by communicating through the press and in personal appeals to reach the required goals for enlistments.¹⁶ Council Chair Hill and the state Council of Defense also worked to get private organizations to support recruitment, encouraging efforts by local Chambers of Commerce at “co-ordinating and systematizing all of the recruiting efforts” across towns and counties.¹⁷ By the time the War Department called all state National Guard forces into federal service on 5 Aug 1917, state leadership successfully recruited to meet the

¹⁴ Royster to Councils of Defense, 25 June 1917, Folder 8, Box 19, WWI 1.

¹⁵ From Apr-Jul 1917, the North Carolina National Guard added an artillery regiment, two troops of cavalry, one machine gun troop, one company of engineers, one engineer train, a radio company, a motor truck company, and a veterinary unit, all while also bringing current units to strength, North Carolina Adjutant General’s Office, *Annual Report, 1917-1918*, 7-8.

¹⁶ Thomas Bickett, “Proclamation, May 1917,” Folder 1, G.P. 373.1; Royster to Mayors, 22 May 1917, Folder 5, G.P. 269; Royster to Pratt, 25 Jun 1917, Folder 8, Box 19, WWI 1; Hill to Pratt, 13 Jul 1917, Folder 9, Box 19, WWI 1.

¹⁷ Fuller to Presidents of NC Chambers of Commerce, 25 Apr 1917, Folder 4, G.P. 369.

authorized strength of its units, with “377 officers and 7,454 enlisted men” shipping to Camp Sevier, South Carolina for final organization and training before heading to France.¹⁸

It should be noted that neither the Adjutant General nor the Council of Defense considered a specific pool of potential recruits that could help bring their National Guard units up to strength – Black North Carolinians. Across the board, the elites of the state running the mobilization did not believe Black men would make good soldiers, let alone that they should serve alongside white men and be “accepted as social equals by their fellow soldiers,” as one North Carolinian wrote to Hill.¹⁹ Recruiting Black men into state military forces was unthinkable at the turn of the twentieth century, despite having raised a Black volunteer regiment at the time of the Spanish-Cuban-American War in 1898-1899.²⁰ The incorporation of Black men into the military for the First World War would only come into conversation as a function of the national draft. It then caused significant debate and frustration among the white state elite and populace, no more so than for African American communities themselves. Because of these issues, the state’s National Guard units would need to be supplemented with hundreds of drafted soldiers to bring them to their full strength before their final organization and deployments to fight in

¹⁸ North Carolina Adjutant General’s Office, *Annual Report, 1917-1918*, 8-10; Royster to Bickett, 1 Jan 1919, Folder 1, G.P. 380; North Carolina Adjutant General’s Office, “Statistical Report, 1927,” Folder 8, AG 84.1.

¹⁹ Drane to Hill, 3 Aug 1917, Folder 7, Box 22, WWI 1; Adriane Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 2011), 7-8; Khary Oronde Polk, *Contagions of Empire: Scientific Racism, Sexuality, and Black Military Workers Abroad, 1898-1948* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 4, 79; Chad Louis Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in World War I Era* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 64-65; Arthur E. Barbeau and Florette Henri, *The Unknown Soldiers: Black American Troops in World War I* (Philadelphia, P.A.: Temple University Press, 1974), 34-35.

²⁰ The Third North Carolina Infantry Regiment did not deploy overseas and was disestablished in 1899 at the same time white supremacists took control of the state and disenfranchised Black male voters in the state constitution. See Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., “North Carolina’s Negro Regiment in the Spanish-American War,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 48, no. 4 (October 1971): 370-387; Charles Johnson, Jr., *African American Soldiers in the National Guard: Recruitment and Deployment during Peacetime and War* (Westport, C.T.: Greenwood Press, 1992), 64, 73-74.

France.²¹ Royster and the North Carolina Council of Defense would need more than simply voluntary enlistments to meet the insatiable national demand for military labor, a fact that would later play into the structuring of the draft in the state.

Joining “Old Hickory” – Employing North Carolina’s Military Capacity

The soldiers of North Carolina were organized into the 30th “Old Hickory” National Guard Division at Camp Sevier from 5 August to 12 September, joining other National Guard troops from South Carolina and Tennessee.²² The 60th Infantry Brigade, which was one of two large infantry units in the 30th Division, was composed almost entirely of North Carolina National Guard units.²³ Their over-representation led to its nickname – the “Tar Heel” Brigade.

Recognizing the War Department’s preference to place Regular Army officers in command of large formations, Bickett and Hill worked to ensure that officers from the Old North State were selected to lead North Carolina’s troops in the 30th Division. The Governor and Council Chair understood the value of strategically placing allies in key positions, a technique they would use throughout the war. By placing a man from North Carolina at the head of the state’s National Guard troops, even if federalized and deployed overseas, extended the connection of the units back home. Such a connection would generate increased consent and support for the war by boosting the morale of soldiers’ families at home. A North Carolinian at the head of state soldiers also ensured a connection to political and military leadership in North Carolina.

²¹ Lemmon, *North Carolina’s Role in the First World War*, 53.

²² *Ibid.*, 51; Center of Military History and William A. Stofft, *Order of Battle of the United States Land Forces in the World War*, vol. 2, *American Expeditionary Forces: Divisions* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1988), 160-169; E.G. Hulse, *Granville County in the World War* (Oxford, N.C.: Press of Oxford Orphanage, 1920), 74-86.

²³ John O. Walker, “Official History of the 120th Infantry,” Folder 10, Box 1, WWI Papers, 1903-1933. Symbolic of the unifying element of the First World War, and the surrender of U.S. military to the Lost Cause, the Tar Heel Brigade also included Company E, 120th Infantry Regiment, nicknamed the “Granville Grays” because of their lineage to Confederate troops in the Civil War, Hulse, *Granville County*, 37.

Despite lobbying from many military academy graduates born in North Carolina, command of the 60th Infantry Brigade was given to Brigadier General Samson L. Faison. Faison was a West Point-educated Regular Army officer born in eastern North Carolina and a veteran of the Apache Wars and the American-Philippines War.²⁴ He would command the 60th “Tar Heel” Brigade throughout the war. Faison would also consistently serve as acting commander of the 30th Division as the notoriously demanding commander of the American Expeditionary Forces, General John J. Pershing, relieved commanders he deemed insufficiently aggressive or incapable.²⁵

External to the 60th “Tar Heel” Brigade, North Carolinians also provided the vast number of soldiers in the 105th Engineer and the 113th Field Artillery Regiments. The former unit, originally formed for the mission on the Mexico border in 1916, included Joseph Hyde Pratt, who was working as an active member of the North Carolina Council of Defense until he joined the unit at Camp Sevier as the assistant commander in September 1917.²⁶ In addition to overseeing the intense training of his unit, Pratt continued advising and participating in the Council of Defense until mid-May 1918, when the engineer regiment finally departed Camp Sevier for France.²⁷ The 113th Field Artillery Regiment, born of the North Carolina 1st Light Field Artillery

²⁴ Peace to Hill, 26 July 1917, Folder 1, P.C. 94.2, Daniel Harvey Hill, Jr. (1859-1924) Papers, 1808-1967, Private Collections, State Archives, Raleigh, N.C. (hereafter P.C. 94).

²⁵ Edward M. Coffman, *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I* (Madison, W.I.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), 330-331; Richard Shawn Faulkner, *Pershing’s Crusaders: The American Soldier in World War I* (Lawrence, K.S.: University Press of Kansas, 2017), 278-279.

²⁶ Willard P. Sullivan and Harry Tucker, “The History of the 105th Regiment of Engineers,” pp. 17-22, Folder 10, Box 1, WWI Papers, 1903-1933.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 19-22; Pratt’s diary of his time in the 105th Engineers was published in serialized fashion from January 1924 to April 1925 in *The North Carolina Historical Review*: “Diary of Colonel Joseph Hyde Pratt, Commanding 105th Engineers, A.E.F.,” *The North Carolina Historical Review*, vol. 1, no. 1 (January 1924): 35-70; “Diary of Colonel Joseph Hyde Pratt, Commanding 105th Engineers, A.E.F.,” *The North Carolina Historical Review*, vol. 1, no. 2 (April 1924): 210-236; “Diary of Colonel Joseph Hyde Pratt, Commanding 105th Engineers, A.E.F.,” *The North Carolina Historical Review*, vol. 1, no. 4 (October 1924): 475-540; “Diary of Colonel Joseph Hyde Pratt, Commanding 105th Engineers, A.E.F.,” *The North Carolina Historical Review*, vol. 2, no. 1 (January 1925): 117-144; “Diary of Colonel Joseph Hyde Pratt,

and formed only after the outbreak of the war, provides a salient example of the associational state's impact on the development of military forces during the First World War. It was also a unique case for North Carolina, with its personnel coming from neither a National Guard unit, nor through the draft.²⁸ It was entirely a volunteer effort, taking shape only four weeks from approval to unit formation, supported by robust publicity and political support by the state Council of Defense.²⁹ Its tie to North Carolina, and the ruling elites that helped form it in the midst of war, can be seen in Battery D, one of the smaller units that made up the regiment. Battery D was composed of volunteers from Anson and Union Counties, the latter the lifelong home of Governor Bickett. During its formation and training, it became known as the 'Bickett Battery,' honoring their governor.³⁰ Again desiring a North Carolinian to command the unit, Bickett requested the War Department give the command to Marion S. Battle, an experienced Regular Army coast artillery officer from North Carolina, because there was "no officer in our national guard who has had any training or experience in field artillery work."³¹ When the War Department declined to assign a Regular Army officer to the position, Bickett and the state Council of Defense were able to persuade Washington to select Albert L. Cox, a former captain in the regiment, as the commander. At the time of appointment, Cox was a judge on the North Carolina superior court and a Democratic ally, providing the Council a strong connection to the

Commanding 105th Engineers, A.E.F.," *The North Carolina Historical Review*, vol. 2, no. 2 (April 1925): 269-299.

²⁸ A.L. Fletcher, unpublished organizational history of 113th Field Artillery Regiment, p. 3, Folder 12, Box 9, WWI Papers, 1903-1933.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

³⁰ Daughters of the American Revolution Craighead-Dunlap Chapter, *Anson County in the World War* (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards & Broughton Company, 1929), 267-272.

³¹ Bickett to Baker, 30 Jun 1917, Folder 1, G.P. 370.

mobilized men from the state, helping to generate support for the war at the same time it was employing its military capacity in service to the nation.³²

As a testament to the associational ties the 113th retained to North Carolina, the unit established an Army Freemason Lodge at Camp Sevier, supported by the Grand Lodge of North Carolina. The lodge was designed to create strong bonds in the unit by allowing soldiers and their officers to meet outside the hierarchy of the Army. For the men who joined the lodge, according to a history of the unit written after the war by one of its soldiers, A.L. Fletcher, it “served to remind the officers of the regiment of the fact that officers in all armies sometimes forget they were only men, clothed for a time in authority, but no whit better than the men under them.”³³ In line with other Progressive policies by the War Department, such as forbidding drinking or sexual contact, the meeting of secret societies was also forbidden on camps.³⁴ In response, 113th personnel requested and received over \$500 in donations from Freemason lodges in North Carolina to rent a meeting space just off base in Greenville, South Carolina. At the first meeting, the group included their brigade commander, Brigadier General George Gatley, as well as the future Fuel Administrator for North Carolina and current Grand Master of North Carolina, George Norfleet. The Grand Master also gifted them a silk flag which the unit carried throughout their time overseas, with Fletcher writing that the men displayed it at every location where they established a lodge, at times “only a few miles from the front [with] the sound of the guns and the muffled roar of shells furnish[ing] a strange accompaniment for the solemn words of the Masonic ritual.”³⁵ This military unit’s ties to a private fraternal organization, gaining moral and financial support to sustain its men, is emblematic of the associational ties that ran throughout the

³² A.L. Fletcher, “History of the 113th Field Artillery, 30th Division,” 1920, p. 15, Folder 5, Box 19, WWI Papers, 1903-1933.

³³ *Ibid.*, 201.

³⁴ Nancy K. Bristow, *Making Men Moral: Social Engineering During the Great War*, 34 (New York, N.Y.: New York University Press, 1996), 12-16.

³⁵ Fletcher, “History of the 113th,” 199-200.

mobilization of military capacity. Even while under the authority of the national government, the uniformed men of North Carolina were materially supported by, and retained connections to, the state – whether through the commanders selected by Bickett and the Council of Defense, or by associational ties to private organizations in the state.

In its role as an intermediary organization coordinating the mobilization, the North Carolina Council of Defense, including its Military Committee led by Adjutant General Royster, were largely able to bring these units up to fighting strength and provide them to the War Department for employment in the war effort. This effort would show results for the American – and Allied – war effort in France. The 30th Division would ultimately spend their time overseas as a part of British and Australian forces in Belgium and during the Somme Offensive, helping to break the German Hindenburg Line and end the war in November 1918.³⁶ Despite the success in quickly mobilizing and deploying its National Guard, North Carolina would need to supplement their state forces with drafted soldiers to bring them to full war-time strength. The need for more than extant state forces shows that an increase in capability would be needed to address the country's demand for military manpower. An increase in capability would only come with the creation of infrastructure in the state for a more comprehensive military mobilization.

Building the Infrastructure for War – Increasing North Carolina's Military Capability

Simultaneous to the mobilizing of the state National Guard, North Carolina had to quickly organize and coordinate efforts to improve the military infrastructure of the state.³⁷ Such infrastructure included training bases for drafted soldiers, a robust registration and induction

³⁶ Thirtieth Division, *Operations, Thirtieth Division, Old Hickory*, pp. 8-11, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources Digital Collections, <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p15012coll10/id/800>, accessed 15 Jun 2021; Sidney W. Minor, "The 120th Infantry, U.S.A. on His Majesty's Service," pages 1-10, Folder 15, WWI 132; Stofft, *Order of Battle*, 163-169.

³⁷ Joseph Hyde Pratt, "History of the North Carolina Council of Defense," unpublished manuscript, circa 1932, Folder 1, Box 1, vol. 2, pp. 202-236, Military Collection, WWI 1.

system under the Selective Service Act that led to the formation of a National Army division, and the integration of private organized elements of the state into supporting conscription. All this infrastructure would be created and coordinated by the state Council of Defense, which itself had to grow in capability to meet the needs of the military mobilization. This infrastructure would transform men, materiel, space, and time into military capabilities for the national state.

The need to support the housing, equipping, and training of men after they were conscripted into a National Army was recognized by both officials in Washington, D.C., and Raleigh even before war was declared.³⁸ The urgency for the establishment of bases only increased as the first registration for Selective Service in June 1917 approached, as well as competition among southern states to receive some allotment of the sixteen camps the War Department projected for the South.³⁹ As early as May 1917, Governor Bickett reached out to the Army's Southeastern Department commander, General Leonard Wood, to establish training camps in the state. Bickett also contacted North Carolina Senators Simmons and Overman, requesting they pressure the War Department to establish military camps in North Carolina.⁴⁰ Both direct and indirect appeals were undertaken by practically every governor in the country, attempting to obtain the benefits that came with camps, such as federal funding and jobs. Later that month the North Carolina Council of Defense also engaged Wood, "urging that three sites in North Carolina be selected for these cantonments."⁴¹ Subsequent communications used the formation of the Council itself as evidence that the state could support the large and chaotic task that would attend to the establishment and support of the new camps.⁴² They also valued having

³⁸ War Department, "Policy on Training Troops and the Establishment of Camps," 23 Apr 1917, Report 6374-24, Roll 20, microfilm M-912, RG 165, NARA; North Carolina Council of Defense, notes from the first meeting, 31 May 1917, Folder 13, Box 13, WWI 1.

³⁹ Coffman, *The War to End All Wars*, 29-30.

⁴⁰ Bickett to Simmons, Overman, and Wood, 19 May 1917, and Wood to Bickett, 21 May 1917, Folder 5, G.P. 369.

⁴¹ North Carolina Council of Defense, notes, 31 May 1917, Folder 13, Box 13, WWI 1.

⁴² Hill and Bickett to Wood, 1 June 1917, Folder 1, G.P. 370.

trained soldiers within the state for security purposes as the National Guard deployed overseas. Ultimately, the War Department would agree to three camps in the state, placing them near Charlotte, Raleigh, and Fayetteville.⁴³ These three camps joined thirteen others in the South, roughly distributed evenly among its states, and sixteen more in the North.⁴⁴

The first and primary camp for mobilization was selected to be placed just outside Charlotte because it was one of the larger cities in the state, located along a well-established rail line, and promised significant land that had adequate water and drainage.⁴⁵ Named in honor of Revolutionary War General Nathanael Greene, who successfully commanded American forces in North and South Carolina against British General Charles Cornwallis, the camp occupied 2,500 acres and eventually had approximately 2,000 buildings. In addition to headquarters and barracks, the camp had a sixty-acre hospital facility with 2,000 beds, horse stables that stretched over a mile, a Y.M.C.A. building for recreation, a post office, and a bakery that produced 40,000 loaves of bread a day. The training area, used for rifle and artillery ranges, added an additional 15,000 acres to the living area of the camp. The camp would become central to the broader infrastructure in the state by supporting the increase of national military capability, though almost all the military troops that passed through its gates were from outside North Carolina.

The selection of Charlotte as a camp location was not a foregone conclusion, as the city competed with cities in the North and South, including fellow North Carolina municipalities Wilmington and Fayetteville.⁴⁶ Bickett and the state Council of Defense did not weigh in on where camps should be placed, as long as they ended up in the state. However, with the support

⁴³ Camp Greene, Camp Bragg, and Camp Polk, respectively.

⁴⁴ C. H. Cramer, *Newton D. Baker: A Biography* (Cleveland, O.H.: World Publishing Company, 1961), 98; Daniel R. Beaver, *Newton D. Baker and the American War Effort 1917-1919* (Lincoln, N.E.: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 59-60.

⁴⁵ James Victory, "Soldier Making: The Forces That Shaped the Infantry Training of White Soldiers in the United States Army in World War I," PhD diss. (Manhattan, K.S.: Kansas State University, 1990), 6-7.

⁴⁶ Miriam G. Mitchell and Edward S. Perzel, *The Echo of the Bugle Call: Charlotte's Role in World War I* (Charlotte, N.C.: Dowd House Preservation Committee, Citizens for Preservation, 1979), 1.

of the state Council of Defense, local Chambers of Commerce actively courted Wood and his staff officers, recognizing that, according to two later historians of Camp Greene, “The government's search for a site to build a major army base offered...an opportunity to revitalize” economic growth.⁴⁷ By far the most ambitious, the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce engaged in a dedicated campaign to woo the notoriously narcissistic Wood, fêting him in high style at the best restaurants and providing him with a large crowd to listen to his thoughts with rapt attention.⁴⁸ Whether through such lavish treatment or based on its logistical possibilities alone, the Chamber of Commerce was successful. On 13 July 1917, Secretary Baker approved the location of a camp near Charlotte. Less than two months later, newly drafted National Army soldiers and elements of the 41st National Guard Division, composed of units from western states like Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming, began to arrive for training.⁴⁹ By December, the 3rd and 4th Regular Army Divisions and even more draftees would also take up residence at Camp Greene for training.⁵⁰

The influx of soldiers into the Charlotte area, all from vastly different areas of the United States, led to frictions with Charlotte natives.⁵¹ With a population of about 34,000 people prior to the war, the city doubled with the addition of Camp Greene, adding between 40,000 to 60,000 soldiers at any one time.⁵² As the Mecklenburg County Council of Defense Chair wrote to Hill, there was “more soldiery then there are men, women, and children white and black, at present in this community.”⁵³ With so many new people arriving, Charlotte residents and leadership of the local government were happy to abide by War Department rules for camps, including the

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Herbert White, “Camp Greene,” *Our State*, 29 Jul 2014, <https://www.ourstate.com/camp-greene/>, accessed 2 Jun 2021; “Canvass Today for Camp Fund,” *Charlotte Observer*, 28 May 1917, Folder 22, Box 9, WWI 2.

⁴⁹ Stofft, *Order of Battle*, 264-265.

⁵⁰ Lemmon, *North Carolina's Role in the First World War*, 52; Stofft, *Order of Battle*, 43-57, 59-73.

⁵¹ Drane to Hill, 3 Aug 1917, Folder 7, Box 22, WWI 1.

⁵² Mitchell and Perzel, *The Echo of the Bugle Call*, 27-40.

⁵³ Drane to Hill, 3 Aug 1917, Folder 7, Box 22, WWI 1.

exclusion of alcohol on or near the camp, as well as standards for “morality,” such as the prevention of prostitution.⁵⁴

With the support of Hill and the state Council of Defense, the county Council of Defense, led primarily by local business elites with ties to the Chamber of Commerce that brought the camp to Charlotte, jumped into the role of mediator between the military officials at Camp Greene and the civilian leadership of Charlotte, though they possessed no real authority beyond “persuasion, argument and reference to higher authorities,” according to state Council Chair Hill.⁵⁵ Displaying some of the challenges of working along associational lines, particularly when bridging a gap between a voluntary local intermediary organization and a hierarchical governmental institution, the Council had to frequently look to the military leadership themselves to use military regulation or other methods of discipline for any punitive authority.

The Council also leveraged and integrated federal efforts at camp regulation, spearheaded by urban reformer Raymond Fosdick through the War Department-supported Commission for Training Camp Activities (later simply referred to as the Fosdick Commission). The Commission focused on developing recreational activities at military camps to act as “the method of attack by the War Department on the evils...traditionally associated with camps and training centers,” a goal heartily supported by Secretary of War Baker.⁵⁶ The North Carolina Council of Defense recognized the importance of this agency, which pulled together seven civilian organizations, including the Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., Jewish Welfare Board, Knights of Columbus, Salvation Army, American Library Association, and War Camp Community Service.

⁵⁴ Mitchell and Perzel, *The Echo of the Bugle Call*, 12.

⁵⁵ Hill to Drane, 6 Aug 1917, Folder 7, Box 22, WWI 1.

⁵⁶ Raymond B. Fosdick, “The Commission on Training Camp Activities,” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science in the City of New York* 7, no. 4 (February 1918): 163; Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 4-7; Cramer, *Newton D. Baker*, 99-102; Beaver, *Newton D. Baker*, 219-222.

By January of 1918, the state Council of Defense began working closely with the state representative of the Fosdick Commission.⁵⁷ Activities included, as related to the County Councils by Hill, raising money and integrating their work into county Councils of Defense around Camp Greene by mobilizing local “churches and benevolent societies...[to]...try in every way to minister to the social needs and comforts of the men called to represent us.”⁵⁸ The Commission, itself an intermediary institution for the War Department, recognized the value of coordinating with the county and state Councils of Defense to obtain the support of Charlotte’s private groups and associations. Integrating them into their entertainment activities provided the Commission the infrastructural power such organizations possessed in the city and surrounding areas, from manpower to the regulation of city and camp personnel. From the Council’s perspective, the Commission provided funds, federal legitimacy, and a link to military officials on Camp Greene that could enforce proper behavior by its soldiers.

In 1918, two additional training camps were established in North Carolina: Camp Polk outside Raleigh and Camp Bragg in Fayetteville. Unlike Camp Greene, which was used only to marshal and train basic infantry forces for deployment, Polk and Bragg focused on specific Army capabilities that the War Department anticipated would be needed in greater numbers as military operations culminated.⁵⁹ In the summer of 1918, the Army was looking for a large enough maneuver area to train the Army’s new tank soldiers. Like the founding of Camp Greene, Camp Polk was chosen through the active engagement of the local Chamber of Commerce, whose membership included many men who also served on the state Council or Wake County Council of Defense. In August 1918, representatives of the Raleigh Chamber traveled to Washington,

⁵⁷ Hill to Porter, 26 Jan 1918, Folder 9, Box 2, WWI 1; Hill to Porter, 6 Feb 1918, Folder 10, Box 2, WWI 1.

⁵⁸ Hill to County Chairmen, 7 Feb 1918, Folder 2, Box 11, WWI 1; Gifford to State Councils of Defense, 23 Apr 1918, Folder 3, Box 3, WWI 1.

⁵⁹ Meighen McCrae, *Coalition Strategy and the End of the First World War: The Supreme War Council and War Planning, 1917-1918* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 139-186.

D.C. and successfully lobbied the War Department by offering more than 22,000 acres of maneuver space, as well as the already cleared North Carolina State Fairgrounds as a temporary training site while the more permanent camp was being constructed.⁶⁰ Beginning training in September of 1918, the camp never held more than about 5,000 soldiers and stopped training within months of the armistice with Germany that November.⁶¹ At the same time Camp Polk was established, the Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce successfully brought a training camp to their area. Named Camp Bragg, it was an ideal placement for an artillery training camp, owing to its cheap, sandy land and the large distances available given its desolate location. However, the camp was not occupied until September of 1918, a mere month before the war ended, and initial construction was not completed until February 1919. The camp provided no real impact on the First World War or the training infrastructure in North Carolina, though it was the only North Carolina camp to survive the drawdown following the war.⁶²

The training camps established in North Carolina provided new capability for the nation's military mobilization, increasing the numbers and types of Regular Army, National Guard, and National Army soldiers that the War Department could train and deploy to France. They were established and managed through a partnership between the federal government, intermediary institutions, and local North Carolinians, each gaining benefit from the arrangement. Two of the three camps had a lasting impact on North Carolina. The presence of Camp Greene fueled not only Charlotte's growth during the war, but also following the war, resulting in the city becoming

⁶⁰ Todd Kosmerick, "Camp Polk: Tanks Come to Raleigh," North Carolina State Libraries Special Collections, 2 July 2018, <https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/news/special-collections/camp-polk:-tanks-come-to-raleigh>, accessed 3 July 2021.

⁶¹ Camp Polk Tank School Records, WWI 99; *Agromeck*, the North Carolina State University yearbook, 1919, 178-179; Kosmerick, "Camp Polk: Tanks Come to Raleigh."

⁶² William S. Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 459-460. For a thorough look at the story of Camp Bragg and its impact on the people and places surrounding it, see Catherine Lutz, *Homefront: A Military City and the American Twentieth Century* (Boston, M.A.: Beacon, 2001).

the economic heart of the state.⁶³ Camp Bragg continues to provide a reminder of the First World War impact on North Carolina to this day, also as a lasting symbol of southern politics and Jim Crow through the retention of its name, coming from the Confederate general, Braxton Bragg. The choice of name was indicative of a state that desired to stay tied to its slaver roots, the misrepresentation of its past martial ‘glory,’ and the continued subjugation of Black citizens.⁶⁴ Of the three camps, Camp Polk had the least impact on the state, having only finally been established in late 1918 and closing in 1920.

Beyond the physical infrastructure created for the war, North Carolina had to institute and adapt the structures and processes for a state-wide registration and draft of military age males under the Selective Service Act. This system of boards expanded the pool of military labor available to the federal government. When it came to the registration of state citizens and the induction of a small proportion of them according to quotas set by the War Department, the draft system dramatically expanded national state power down to the local level. The extension of federal power was not done through fiat or unilaterally, or via despotic power, as defined by Michael Mann.⁶⁵ Instead, the power was diffused down to local actors and those they delegated from organized society, requiring continual negotiation with state and local actors, in the public and private sectors. Dependence on such infrastructural power meant that to translate societal resources like male labor into trained soldiers for war, the War Department had to empower and rely upon an institutional infrastructure controlled by North Carolinian elites in the form of the

⁶³ Mitchell and Perzel, *The Echo of the Bugle Call*.

⁶⁴ For more on Fort Bragg’s First World War history, see Lutz, *Homefront*, 29; William J. Snow, *Signposts of Experience: World War Memoirs of Major General William J. Snow* (Washington, D.C.: United States Field Artillery Association, 1941). For contemporary arguments on the naming convention of Fort Bragg, see Jay Price, “If the Military Renames Southern Bases, Whose Names Should Replace The Confederate Generals?,” Blue Ridge Public Radio, 23 June 2020, <https://www.bpr.org/post/if-military-renames-southern-bases-whose-names-should-replace-confederate-generals#stream/0>, accessed 19 Jan 2022; and Robert F. Williams, “Renaming Southern Army Bases Is Nothing New,” *Origins*, 18 Jan 2021, <https://origins.osu.edu/connecting-history/renaming-southern-army-bases-civil-war>, accessed 19 Jan 2022.

⁶⁵ Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, vol. 3 (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 13.

state Council of Defense and state, county, and local boards established and supported by it. While this reliance created some issues for the national government, it underwrote a massive expansion of national military power and ensured a unity of effort spanning federal, state, and local actors in the public and private sectors. As John D. Langston, a lawyer from Goldsboro, N.C. who became an integral member of the North Carolina and national Selective Service Systems, wrote at the end of the war, “The use of the State officials in administering the draft has brought[t] about a closer union between the States and the Central Administration, thus welding more firmly the various parts of the Union. The Governors of the States have become in a sense Federal officials with a corresponding sense of responsibility to the National Government that did not theretofore exist.”⁶⁶

The establishment of a conscription system to quickly expand the military for war was debated, planned, and even prepared for even before its passage in Congress as the Selective Service Act on 18 May 1917.⁶⁷ Secretary of War Baker and Provost Marshall General Crowder spent the better part of April putting the system in place by focusing on implementing regulations and familiarizing the states with the requirements for the draft.⁶⁸ Preparing the states was crucial for the system, as the draft was to be centrally directed by the War Department, but decentralized in execution. Decentralization required the War Department to rely upon governors and the draft boards they appointed throughout their jurisdictions.⁶⁹ As Baker communicated to Bickett weeks before the legislation was passed, the Selective Service System would include four parts: first, a

⁶⁶ War Department, memorandum for General Crowder, 2 Dec 1918, Scrapbook Vol. 3 - World War Service, 1917-1919, 1987 addition, Box 1, John Dallas Langston Papers, 1842-1969, Rubenstein Library Special Collections, Duke University (Langston Papers).

⁶⁷ United States, Congress, Selective Service Act, 18 May 1917, 40 Statute 76 (Public Law 65-12), https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/docview/t41.d42.65_pl_12?accountid=10598, accessed 21 Jan 2022.

⁶⁸ Peyton March, unpublished monograph, “Mobilization and Demobilization of the American Army in the World War,” written in 1920, p. 6, WWI Mobilization, Major Clifford C. Early, Historical Reference Collection 314.8, Center for Military History, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C.

⁶⁹ Baker to Bickett, 30 Apr 1917, Folder 4, G.P. 369.

central bureau in the form of the Provost Marshall General's Office; second, "a collection of State and territorial systems decentralized as far as possible under control of the governors;"⁷⁰ third, county and municipal boards under the direction of the state system; and finally, a registrar in each voting precinct. Baker believed that the "very best means that could possibly be employed for such a necessary and emergent national task are the political organizations of the several states," meaning the extant election infrastructure built around voting precincts.⁷¹ Waxing poetic as he reflected on his experience of the Selective Service at both the state and federal level, Langston later described how, "The system was peculiarly democratic in that it lodged with the smallest unit practicable the maximum of authority. It was essentially the people's institution."⁷² Populated by local individuals, appointed by the governor, and managed at the state level through the coordination of the North Carolina Council of Defense, the conscription system established in the summer of 1917 would be a key element of the extension of federal power into the state and the expansion of military capability throughout the war.

In fact, North Carolina's Council of Defense by its very existence extended the power of the federal government into the state, seen most immediately by its efforts to organize the registration and classification of citizens for military conscription. The coordination between the North Carolina Council of Defense and the local conscription boards would become routine activity in the year and a half ahead. Beginning even before its official establishment in late May 1917, Joseph Hyde Pratt represented a nascent state Council of Defense as he coordinated and publicized the requirements for registration of men for the draft. Pratt's activities included writing a proclamation from the Governor and contacting local county and municipal officials to prepare

⁷⁰ Baker to Bickett, 23 Apr 1917, Folder 4, G.P. 369, 4.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷² War Department, memorandum for General Crowder, 2 Dec 1918, Scrapbook, vol. 3 - World War Service, 1917-1919, 1987 addition, Box 1, Langston Papers.

for a state-led official registration day on 5 June 1917.⁷³ Additionally, Pratt supported the organization of registration boards at the city and county levels, a task transferred to D.H. Hill when he was named the Chair of the North Carolina Council of Defense in late May.⁷⁴ Per guidance promulgated by General Crowder's office in Washington, registration boards were to be uniform in composition, focused at the county and municipal level.⁷⁵ This registration system was designed to use the extant political system within the state, co-opting them for a national purpose to an extent that such reliance "has never before been made in our [American] history."⁷⁶ The chair or executive of the registration board was the county sheriff or municipal chief of police, who could ostensibly attest to the character of local registrants, as well as identify citizens that failed to appear. He was joined by the county or municipal clerk, who was familiar with the local election machinery upon which the registration system was built and could act as the custodian of records. Finally, the county physician or a local medical doctor provided an initial, cursory medical examination and assisted in identifying the age of registrants, if required.⁷⁷ These three board members then appointed registrars within established voting precincts, one registrar per eighty anticipated registrants. All board members and registrants were given commissions by Governor Bickett between the signing of the Selective Service Act and the official registration day.⁷⁸ The intent of the registration was to collect basic demographic data of men from twenty-

⁷³ Thomas Bickett, "Proclamation for Registration Day," 26 May 1917, Folder 7, Box 19, WWI 1; Pratt to "Madam," 30 May 1917, Folder 6, Box 9, WWI 1; Gifford to state CoDs, 22 May 1917, Folder 10, Box 14, WWI 1; Pratt to Counties, 28 May 1917, Folder 10, Box 14, WWI 1.

⁷⁴ North Carolina Council of Defense, notes, 31 May 1917, Folder 13, Box 13, WWI 1.

⁷⁵ Crowder to Bickett, 26 May 1917, Folder 5, G.P. 369; U.S. War Department, *Report of the Provost Marshal General to the Secretary of War on the First Draft Under the Selective-Service Act, 1917* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918), 8-9.

⁷⁶ U.S. War Department, *First Draft*, 9; Bickett to County Clerks, Sheriffs, and County Physicians, and Mayors, 19 May 1917, Folder 5, G.P. 369; North Carolina Adjutant General's Department, *Annual Report, 1917-1918*, 231-239.

⁷⁷ J.S. Kuykendall, "Report of the Local Exemption Board for the City of Winston-Salem," p. 11, Folder 1, Box 2, WWI 3.

⁷⁸ North Carolina Adjutant General's Department, *Annual Report, 1917-1918*, 231-239; Bickett to Crowder, 19 May 1917, Folder 5, G.P. 369; U.S. War Department, *First Draft*, 8; Bickett to Crowder, 19

one to thirty-one years of age in the state to ensure an expansive pool of possible soldiers to meet the requirements of conscription under the Selective Service Act.⁷⁹ This decentralized system, at state, county, and local levels, relied on a mixture of elected and volunteering private individuals, and embodied the defining features of the American associational state tasked with the increase of the nation's military capability.

The North Carolina Council of Defense took up the task of military manpower mobilization immediately upon establishment, coordinating with the War Department to nominate and establish registration boards in all one hundred counties in the state, picking up the task which had to that point been managed by the governor himself, with the assistance of Pratt.⁸⁰ These boards ultimately registered almost 500,000 white and Black North Carolinians for possible service during the war, approximately all the men in the state between the ages of 21 and 31.⁸¹ The Council was also instrumental in coordinating civil society as a part of the mechanics of registration, with Hill writing to men in each of his state's one-hundred counties, encouraging them to ensure the boards in their areas "receives the vigorous and cordial support of the strong men and women of your county."⁸² In Winston-Salem, for example, the state Council of Defense,

May 1917, Folder 5, G.P. 369; Bickett to County Sheriffs, Clerks, and Physicians, 19 May 1917, Folder 5, G.P. 369.

⁷⁹ On 5 June 1917, North Carolina registered just over 208,000 men. U.S. War Department, *Second Report of the Provost Marshal General to the Secretary of War on the Operations of the Selective Service System to December 20, 1918* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1919), 396. While this number was only about half of the men between the ages of 21 and 31 based on the 1910 census, it was more than enough to meet the initial quota of approximately 69,000 men for the levy of conscripts in the state. *Ibid.*, 463. For data from the 1910 census regarding age, see Department of Commerce Bureau of Statistics, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year of 1910: Statistics for North Carolina* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1914), Table 7, p. 592.

⁸⁰ Morehead to Hill, 22 June 1917, Folder 2, Box 2, WWI 1.

⁸¹ Lemmon, *North Carolina's Role in the First World War*, 23; U.S. War Department, *Second Report*, 396. The total number of military age males is based on the 1910 census, Department of Commerce Bureau of Statistics, *Thirteenth Census of the United States*, Table 7, page 592.

⁸² Hill to County Council of Defense Chairmen, 17 July 1917, Folder 10, Box 13, WWI 1.

as captured by County Council member J.S. Kuykendall, coordinated registration work with “The Mayor and Board of Alderman, the Bar Association, the Rotary Club, the Y.M.C.A. and the Red Cross Chapter” to undertake “the responsibility and carr[y] forward the work, through the Registrar, at the various precincts.”⁸³

After assisting with the formation of registration boards, the state Council’s main task was ensuring publicity and support of registration itself.⁸⁴ This organizational and informational effort brought the North Carolina Council of Defense’s role as an intermediary institution into sharp focus.⁸⁵ From a position within the state government, leveraging county and local government infrastructure, and translating the federal government’s requirements for military registration, the Council of Defense approached and integrated private groups within organized society to generate consent and create supportive local sentiment encouraging all applicable men to register. Organized groups that supported registration included local Chambers of Commerce, Rotary Clubs, Merchants’ Associations, Boy Scouts, Red Cross chapters, ministers, factory management, and Woman’s Clubs.⁸⁶ As reported in the *Raleigh News and Observer*, all were asked to participate in pre-event planning and the publicizing of registration day, by sharing the legal requirements of the Selective Service Act through the press and writing letters to “every minister, mayor, school committeeman, physician and every other influential and prominent man in the county urging that they use their influence in bringing about the fullest compliance” of the

⁸³ Kuykendall, “Report of the Local Exemption Board,” p. 13, Folder 1, Box 2, WWI 3. There is also a list of many more private companies and individuals that supported the registration in Winston-Salem on page 16.

⁸⁴ North Carolina Council of Defense, Report to the Council of National Defense, 11 Jun 1917, Folder 14, Box 13, WWI 1; “Your Patriotic Duty: Register on June 5th,” *Raleigh News and Observer*, 27 May 1917, Folder 30, Box 11, WWI 2.

⁸⁵ “Draft to Take One Man Out of Twenty,” *Asheville Times*, 27 May 1917, Folder 12, Box 1, WWI 2; No title, *Raleigh News & Observer*, Folder 30, Box 11, County Records, WWI 2; Morehead to Hill, 22 June 1917, Folder 2, Box 2, WWI 1.

⁸⁶ “Will Cooperate with Registrars,” *Raleigh News and Observer*, 29 May 1917, Folder 30, Box 11, WWI 2; Colman to Pratt, 4 Jun 1917, Folder 8, Box 19, WWI 1; North Carolina Council of Defense, Report to the Council of National Defense, 11 Jun 1917, Folder 14, Box 13, WWI 1.

law.⁸⁷ The state Council of Defense also requested such private groups create arm band badges that local women could place on men who registered.⁸⁸ This increased pride in registering, as well as visibly identified those men who failed to sign up.⁸⁹

The primary levers of power in North Carolina regarding conscription were held by General Royster as the state Adjutant General. In this position, Royster was the executive agent of the Governor, who under the provisions of the Selective Service Act “was charged with general supervision of the draft in the State.”⁹⁰ Royster was also an *ex officio* member of the North Carolina Council of Defense executive committee and the chair of its Military Affairs Committee.⁹¹ This positioning both within the state government and as a member of the Council of Defense allowed Royster to manage the complex process of conscription, which was highly dependent on the service of private individuals and groups from organized society, while also integrating mechanisms of governance at the state, county, and local levels.⁹²

The fusing of the private and the public in the conscription system took full form in the state’s Department of Military Enrollment. This office complemented the Adjutant General’s Office and his role on the state Council of Defense, which focused on the basic mechanics of military registration and conscription, with the administrative requirements levied by the War Department in Washington, D.C. The office also handled the legal, political, and organizational challenges managed by the Governor in the execution of the draft.⁹³ By the end of 1917, the Department of Military Enrollment was run by John Langston, who previously served on the

⁸⁷ “Will Cooperate with Registrars: Joint Committee Named by Business and Civic Organizations,” *Raleigh News and Observer*, 29 May 1917, Folder 30, Box 11, WWI 2.

⁸⁸ Pratt to local county elites, 28 May 1917, Folder 10, Box 14, WWI 1.

⁸⁹ Pratt to Marsh, 29 May 1917, Folder 7, Box 19, WWI 1; Colman to Pratt, 4 Jun 1917, Folder 8, Box 19, WWI 1.

⁹⁰ North Carolina Adjutant General’s Department, *Annual Report, 1917-1918*, 231.

⁹¹ Royster to Hill, 13 Jun 1917, Folder 14, Box 8, WWI 1.

⁹² Royster to County Sheriffs, Folder 26, Box 5, WWI 3.

⁹³ Crowder to Bickett, 4 May 1918, Folder 1, G.P. 375; North Carolina Adjutant General’s Department, *Annual Report, 1917-1918*, 254; John Langston, “The Organization of National and State Headquarters,” page 17, Folder 2, Box 2, Langston Papers.

Wayne County Council of Defense and organized the North Carolina's Eastern District Board, which managed the appeals of registrants regarding their classification for conscription. Based on his diligent work in that latter capacity, Bickett convinced the War Department to commission Langston a major in the U.S. Army Reserve, allowing the Governor to appoint him to manage the draft in the state and dispense federal money in the endeavor.⁹⁴ According to Langston, despite initial friction between himself and Royster over their roles in the draft, by early 1918 "the work progressed smoothly," supported by civil society engagement provided by the state Council of Defense and the Adjutant General's integration into its Military Committee.⁹⁵ Langston was eventually pulled to Washington to work on Selective Service for the War Department, becoming an "indispensable man" in the execution of the draft, according to General Crowder.⁹⁶ The Provost Marshall General would acknowledge to Langston after the war that he knew of "no one who has understood the draft better than you."⁹⁷

Of the almost 500,000 men who were registered in North Carolina, the state inducted over 55,000 into the National Army. Most of these men were dispersed among various Regular Army, National Guard, and National Army divisions as supplemental manpower to increase the numbers of understrength units, including in the 30th Division. The unit that received the most North Carolinians was the 81st "Wildcat" National Army Division, which formed at Fort Jackson,

⁹⁴ Hill to Langston, 25 Jun 1917, Scrapbook, vol. 2 - Pre-World War, 1910-1917, 1987 addition, Box 1, Langston Papers; John Langston, "Brief Autobiography of John D. Langston," 1934, Box 3, , Langston Papers, p. 8; Bickett to Langston, 14 Nov 1917, Scrapbook, vol. 3 - World War Service, 1917-1919, 1987 addition, Box 1, Langston Papers; John Langston, "Brief Autobiography of John D. Langston," 1934, Box 3, Langston Papers, p. 8.

⁹⁵ John Langston, "Brief Autobiography of John D. Langston," 1934, Box 3, Langston Papers, p. 2; Bickett to Crowder, 24 Jan 1918, Folder 1, G.P. 374; Langston to Bickett, 17 May 1918, Folder 1, G.P. 375.

⁹⁶ War Department, Special Orders No. 184, 7 Aug 1918, Scrapbook, vol. 3 - World War Service, 1917-1919, 1987 addition, Box 1, Langston Papers; War Department, Statement of Service for John Dallas Langston, Scrapbook, vol. 1 - Early Life and Misc., 1987 addition, Box 1, Langston Papers.

⁹⁷ Crowder to Langston, 16 Apr 1919, Box 21, Langston Papers.

South Carolina beginning in September 1917.⁹⁸ Like in the 30th Division, a native North Carolinian and Regular Army officer commanded a brigade in the 81st and frequently served as the division commander. Brigadier General George McIver, born in eastern North Carolina, attended West Point and was a veteran of the Sioux Wars, the Spanish-Cuban-American War, and many domestic labor incidents.⁹⁹ McIver and the 81st spent the next nine months receiving drafted men, equipping them, and conducting initial training both at Camp Jackson, and then at Camp Sevier.¹⁰⁰ In July 1918, the 81st Division departed for France, ultimately fighting with the French in the Meuse-Argonne campaign and supporting post-Armistice operations in France until May 1919.¹⁰¹

In addition to employing the state's immediate military capacity found in the National Guard and increasing the capability of the state to generate new military manpower, North Carolina's leadership coordinated and integrated individuals and the various groups from organized society in the state to generate military power. The North Carolina Council of Defense, led by the Adjutant General as the head of the Military Committee, was able to accomplish this task in two primary ways. First, the Council and associated organizations worked together to ensure North Carolina units were brought up to strength, kept together to the greatest extent possible, and led by men from the state and chosen by Governor Bickett and Council Chair Hill. As discussed earlier, it was important for both morale and recruitment purposes for North

⁹⁸ Lemmon, *North Carolina's Role in the First World War*, 52; Stofft, *Order of Battle*, 338-345; Daughters of the American Revolution, *Anson County*, 272-276.

⁹⁹ George Willcox McIver, *Autobiography of George Willcox McIver*, Box 3, George Willcox McIver Papers (#251), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, N.C. (hereafter McIver Papers).

¹⁰⁰ George W. McIver, "Service with the 81st Division at Camp Jackson," unpublished chapter, p. 7, Folder 9, WWI 98.

¹⁰¹ Clarence Walton Johnson, *The History of the 321st Infantry with a Brief Historical Sketch of the 81st Division* (Columbia, S.C.: The R.L. Bryan Co., 1919), 42-103; Stofft, *Order of Battle*, 341-345.

Carolínians to serve together with their neighbors and countrymen.¹⁰² While this would be more challenging when it came to drafted soldiers, Governor Bickett, the Adjutant General, and the state Council of Defense were able to largely keep North Carolina National Guard units together, particularly at the regimental level.¹⁰³

Second, the Council helped coordinate robust support for mobilized soldiers and their families, both during the process of mobilization and entraining them for movement to Camp Sevier, but also in sustaining them while undergoing training at camp and when deployed to France. The North Carolina Council of Defense focused on providing legal and business support for mobilizing National Guard soldiers.¹⁰⁴ Shortly after the formation of the state Council, James Pou, a member of the Legal Committee, proposed the creation of Soldiers' Legal Aid Committees (later renamed Soldiers' Business Aid Committees). These organizations were created by county Councils of Defense by enlisting "lawyer[s] of standing and character in each county who will agree to give legal advice free of charge" to "advise and assist registrants in all matters pertaining to the registration and draft."¹⁰⁵ Such support from these committees went far beyond simply providing legal advice on the intricacies of the Selective Service Act and its requirements. Through the end of the war, the committees provided free services for soldiers and their families that addressed taxes, mortgages, property, legal support for dependents in their absence, and voting support.¹⁰⁶ Addressing the moral and professional obligations the Council of Defense had to its drafted citizens, Chair Hill detailed how the purpose of these committees were "to assist an

¹⁰² Page to Hill, 17 Jun 1917, Folder 2, Box 2, WWI 1; Wilson to North Carolina Congressional Delegation, 2 Aug 1917, Folder 4, Box 2, WWI 1.

¹⁰³ Wilson to Overman, 16 Aug 1917, Folder 4, Box 2, WWI 1.

¹⁰⁴ These legal services would also later be provided to drafted men, State Councils Section, Weekly Report No. 50, 29 Jul 1918, Folder 5, Box 6, Henry Mauris Robinson Papers, 1917-1936, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, C.A. (hereafter Robinson Papers).

¹⁰⁵ Wilson to Anderson, 28 Jun 1917, Folder 2, Box 2, WWI 1; North Carolina Adjutant General's Department, *Annual Report, 1917-1918*, 240; Hill to members of the North Carolina Council of Defense, 21 Sep 1917, Folder 14, Box 13, WWI 1.

¹⁰⁶ North Carolina Council of Defense, memo, 20 July 1917, Folder 18, Box 14, WWI 1; Hill to Porter, 4 Dec 1917, Folder 8, Box 2, WWI 1; Hill to Porter, 26 Jan 1918, Folder 9, Box 2, WWI 1.

absent soldier in the same manner as a brother would assist an absent brother in looking after his financial affairs and holding his property safe until the absent brother returns.”¹⁰⁷ This work would also eventually include a robust effort to get soldiers to sign up for the federal government-subsidized war risk insurance. The state Council of Defense actively participated in this effort, including a visit by Governor Bickett and Hill to Camps Sevier and Jackson to encourage soldiers from the state to enroll. Showing the complexity of authority in a military raised through the associational state, Bickett and Hill communicated a requirement to all National Guard units, even though federalized and under national control, to report their insurance enrollment numbers until they reached one hundred percent.¹⁰⁸

The Soldiers’ Business Aid Committee concept was an innovation that would ultimately spread to other Councils of Defense, both through the bilateral communication between state Councils and the adoption and dissemination of the idea by the Council of National Defense.¹⁰⁹ Such work was seen by the national leadership in Washington, captured by member of the Council of National Defense Frederick Allen, as “a natural State Council activity” as it reduced anxiousness and social friction caused by the drafting of men from their normal lives, while also not requiring “the expenditure of federal funds [or] the exercise of federal authority.”¹¹⁰

The legal support provided by the Soldiers’ Business Aid Committees, with the help of the state Council of Defense and its integration of elements of civil society in their relief work,

¹⁰⁷ North Carolina Council of Defense, memo, 20 July 1917, Folder 18, Box 14, WWI 1.

¹⁰⁸ Hill to Porter, 4 Dec 1917, Folder 8, Box 2, WWI 1; Bickett to Ministers, 8 Feb 1918, in R.B. House, ed., *Public Letters and Papers of Thomas Walter Bickett, Governor of North Carolina, 1917-1921* (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1923), 132-133; Bickett to Young, 16 Feb 1918, Folder 2, G.P. 374. This insurance required soldiers to allot about \$15 per month, which the government would add up to \$50 and send to applicable dependents, as well as pay out \$4,500 on the death of the soldier, Paul H. Douglas, “The War Risk Insurance Act,” *Journal of Political Economy* 26, no. 5 (May 1918): 461–483.

¹⁰⁹ Wilson to Anderson, 28 Jun 1917, Folder 2, Box 2, WWI 1; Porter to Hill, 20 July 1917, Folder 3, Box 2, WWI 1; William James Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home: Civilian Mobilization, Wartime Federalism, and the Council of National Defense, 1917-1919* (Westport, C.N.: Praeger, 1984), 102.

¹¹⁰ Frederick Lewis Allen, “The Council of Defense System: A History Submitted to the Director of the Council of National Defense,” unpublished, pp. 153, 17-B.1, Box 1053, RG 62, NARA.

had enough of an impact that friction arose with the American Red Cross. While a non-profit and private entity, the Red Cross was chartered by Congress to conduct certain activities on behalf of the U.S. government, including “to act in matters of voluntary relief” that included soldiers’ families.¹¹¹ As the Soldiers’ Business Aid Committees expanded to support soldiers’ families, the Red Cross expanded its relief work from families to address soldiers’ needs at the same time. This overlap created friction between both organizations at the state and federal levels until a division of labor was developed. In North Carolina, the development of clear lines of effort were developed by the state Council of Defense Legal Committee and enacted by county Soldiers’ Business Aid Committees in agreement with local branches of the Red Cross. Ultimately, Soldiers’ Business Aid Committees would focus on the affairs of soldiers and their business or property, while the Red Cross looked after soldiers’ families.¹¹² The coordination of these efforts is yet another example of the role the North Carolina Council of Defense played in managing the associational elements of the mobilization of military manpower and its effect on the state during the war, coordinating work across the public and private realms.

The state Council’s Committee on Coordination Work and the Woman’s Committee also integrated civil society into supporting mobilized soldiers and their families. They coordinated between the Army, Red Cross, Y.M.C.A., and other organizations to ensure soldiers were cared for during movement to training bases, as well as while training at camp. Such activities included the establishment of a Red Cross canteen and showers for the men moving through Raleigh on to training camps in South Carolina, Y.M.C.A. hostess locations at Camps Sevier and Jackson, entertainment events managed by the War Camp Community Service, and the collection and

¹¹¹ United States, Congress, American National Red Cross Act, 5 Jan 1905, p. 600, Public Law 58-4, 33 Stat. 599, Section 3, 58th Congress, 2nd Session, https://congressional-proquest-com.proxy.lib.duke.edu/congressional/docview/t41.d42.58_pl_4_3?accountid=10598, accessed 21 Jan 2022.

¹¹² Pou to Bickett, “Final Report of the Wake County Soldiers’ Business Aid Committee,” 20 May 1920, pp. 2-4, Folder 76, Box 15, WWI 1; Allen, “The Council of Defense System,” 153-156; Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 30.

shipping of local newspapers, magazines, and books to soldiers in camp and then deployed to Europe.¹¹³

These activities display the role of the North Carolina Council of Defense in ensuring a continuing link between society to its deploying soldiers. From expanding the National Guard in support of the federal government, to mobilizing organized society in the state behind the war, the North Carolina Council of Defense was the intermediary institution tying together the various governmental, private, and individual efforts at the federal, state, and local levels. The efforts of the Council ensured North Carolina possessed the capacity and increased its capability to provide the national government with the military power it needed in the First World War. The state Council of Defense also established the infrastructure and processes necessary to expand federal power down to the local level, leveraging the infrastructural power inherent in the American system of governance. The use of infrastructural power to grow military capacity and capability was not without cost to the federal government, however. Social and political cleavages in North Carolina would shape the state Council's military mobilization efforts, inhibiting federal power to ensure the Democrat-dominated white supremacist order in the state.

State Influence on Military Mobilization – The Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion

Writing to political elites in every county of the state, Governor Bickett asked them to nominate “intelligent, patriotic men who are in real sympathy with the Government in the prosecution of this war” to sit on local exemption boards for the state's Selective Service

¹¹³ Raleigh Chapter of the Red Cross, *History of the Raleigh Chapter of American Red Cross and of its Branches and Auxiliaries, 1916-1919* (Raleigh, N.C.: Red Cross Executive Board, 1920), Folder 8, Box 3, WWI 6; Postcard from Red Cross Raleigh, N.C. Chapter, RCM2006.001.019, City of Raleigh Museum, Raleigh, N.C.; Daniels to Hill, 9 Feb 1918, Folder 15, Box 16, WWI 1; North Carolina Council of Defense, Report to the Council of National Defense, 11 Jun 1917, Folder 14, Box 13, WWI 1; Hill to County Chairmen, 4 Sep 1917, Folder 10, Box 13, WWI 1.

System.¹¹⁴ In Bickett's estimation, such duties required men who, above all, would show loyalty. Throughout the war, Bickett professed that such loyalty could be shown by men from any political party, though this was as much an attempt to gain support from as many North Carolinians as possible as it was true selfless patriotism. It was also a political calculation. At one point, Bickett wrote to a Republican leader in Cabarrus County that, "If I had a political enemy I would want to put him on a local exemption board, because I think the position of necessity spells political suicide in the county, for if a man does his duty he will make ninety-nine enemies where he makes one friend."¹¹⁵

Such political calculations inevitably led to the inclusion of certain citizens and the exclusion of others in mobilization activities in the state. In fact, as the North Carolina Council of Defense structured and managed military mobilization in the state, local politics and ideologies inevitably shaped the Council's efforts, including class, race, and the role of the federal government in state affairs. Diverging from the national government's desires, particularly regarding class and race, the ways in which the Council structured the increase of capacity and capability to meet the needs of the nation for military manpower influenced, and in areas constrained, the expansion of federal power into the state. The local politics of inclusion and exclusion in North Carolina affected the creation and execution of the state's exemption process for registered soldiers, the enforcement of conscription in the face of perceived vagrancy and actual desertion, and the broader integration of civilian efforts into the military mobilization. Throughout, the North Carolina Council of Defense structured activities and chose the individuals

¹¹⁴ Bickett to county political leaders, 2 Jun 1917, Folder 1, G.P. 370.

¹¹⁵ Bickett to Ward, 26 Jun 1918, Folder 2, G.P. 375. Bickett also shared these views with fellow Democrats, writing to a man who would ultimately sit on a Pitt County local board (and caused no end of trouble in the state due to his political approach to exemptions) that, "I would infinitely prefer to go to war than to serve on a local exemption board. It is the most disagreeable, the most thankless and at the same time the most necessary and patriotic work there and he says it has been called upon to perform in this generation." Bickett to Laughinghouse, 21 May 1918, Folder 1, G.P. 375.

who would ensure their control over mobilization and manage the balance of race and class relations in the state to maintain the consent of most citizens in the state.

The efforts of the North Carolina Council of Defense to manage military mobilization began before the initial registration of men for conscription even ended, as seen in the creation of local exemption boards which took over the military mobilization process from registration boards.¹¹⁶ These ‘local boards’ selected registered individuals based on a quota provided by the War Department, then determined exemptions for each individual before inducting and sending them to a training camp.¹¹⁷ After registering under Selective Service, men were provided a questionnaire to fill out that included categories of exemption from military service, the most pertinent being that of dependency and employment in key war industries. Dependency was a loaded category not solely based upon whether a registrant was married or had children, but also on whether a member of that soldier’s family was dependent on their economic production.¹¹⁸ In other words, exemption for dependency was contingent on whether a registrant and his family would be significantly financially harmed by being drafted. If the soldier and his family would make more money from a military salary, then the registrant could not claim dependency. This approach led to a demonstrable variance in who was exempted based upon class, particularly in the South where, according to historian K. Walter Hickel, “stark social inequalities” were rampant, thereby unevenly distributing the burden of service.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ The only use of registration boards was in the initial 5 June 1917 registration of 21–30-year-old men for Selective Service. After this, the registration, classification, and induction of draftees was performed by reconstituted exemption or “local” boards, North Carolina Adjutant General’s Department, *Annual Report, 1917-1918*, 239.

¹¹⁷ Crowder to Bickett, 26 May 1917, Folder 5, G.P. 369.

¹¹⁸ Jeanette Keith, *Rich Man’s War, Poor Man’s Fight: Race, Class, and Power in the Rural South during the First World War* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 63.

¹¹⁹ K. Walter Hickel, “‘Justice and the Highest Kind of Equality Require Discrimination’: Citizenship, Dependency, and Conscription in the South, 1917-1919,” *The Journal of Southern History* 66, no. 4 (November 2000): 751.

The second category for exemption involved employment, or as General Crowder categorized them, “the so called ‘necessary’ industries, which have a direct relation to the military problem.”¹²⁰ While wide-ranging and detailed, these categories basically covered industrial, mining, and manufacturing jobs that produced material for armies; from metals to cloth, and engineering to finance. Other categories of employment exemptions included political and social leadership, such as government leaders and clergymen.¹²¹ Agricultural employment, the dominant economic sector in North Carolina, was not an official factor in the exemption process, no matter the pressure put on the federal government by Bickett, Hill, and the state’s congressional delegation. The federal government was interested in the amount of excess materiel that was produced and profit made, not the activity itself, leading “Selective Service regulations [to exempt] only commercial farmers; subsistence farmers needed not apply,” according to historian Jeanette Keith.¹²² Once a registrant submitted his questionnaire, he then underwent a physical examination. Together with the questionnaire, the examination provided the information needed for a local board to determine classification.¹²³

The classification system Crowder put into place included five classes. Class I citizens were eligible to be drafted for military service and included single men, married men with no children, and married men who could not claim dependency based on their economic situation. Classes II and III would not be drafted until all the men in Class I had been drafted and included both single and married men employed in necessary industries. Class IV would only follow the drafting of previous classes of men and included those whose dependents could not claim any other support, the heads of necessary business enterprises, and those exempted by statute, such as elected officials. Finally, men classified as Class V were permanently exempted from the draft

¹²⁰ U.S. War Department, *Second Report*, 13.

¹²¹ U.S. War Department, *Second Report*, 405-416.

¹²² Keith, *Rich Man’s War*, 66.

¹²³ Kuykendall, “Report of the Local Exemption Board,” p. 153-156, Folder 1, Box 2, WWI 3.

and included those ordained as clergy, already serving on active military service, resident aliens, and those permanently physically or mentally unfit for military service.¹²⁴ From classification, a portion of registered men were inducted for service based on a quota sent from the War Department to Adjutant General Royster. From this state-wide quota, the Adjutant General determined a quota for each local board, who then notified registrants in Class I according to their order number as to the date, time, and location they were to report to enter military service.

Men who were selected for induction, before or after notification, could appeal their classification. These appeals were heard first by their local boards, then adjudicated by district boards, such as the North Carolina Eastern District Board chaired by John Langston until he took over the Office of Military Enrollment. Asserting federal authority in this system, Crowder stated that local boards, who he envisioned to be made up of the same local sheriffs, county clerks, and county physicians serving on the now disbanded registration boards, worked under the “direction of the President and the supervision of the governor *in all functions save that of determining exemptions*. In this latter function they will be *under very direct Federal supervision and through the medium of the Federal district board.*”¹²⁵

The authority of the federal government to dictate exemptions was contested by Governor Bickett and the North Carolina Council of Defense, however.¹²⁶ Crowder’s conception of local boards composed of government officials, and district boards removed from local concerns, were designed to remove politics from the exemption process. In North Carolina, the removal of the power of exemptions from local leaders in and of itself created political issues, however.¹²⁷ For Bickett and the leaders of the state Council of Defense, this removal prevented them from

¹²⁴ U.S. War Department, *Second Report*, 45-48; John Whiteclay Chambers, *To Raise an Army: The Draft Comes to Modern America* (New York, N.Y.: Free Press, 1987), 191; Keith, *Rich Man’s War*, 62.

¹²⁵ U.S. War Department, *First Draft*, 12, emphasis added; U.S. War Department, *Second Report*, 265-266.

¹²⁶ U.S. War Department, *First Draft*, 13.

¹²⁷ Bickett to Crowder, 28 May 1917, Folder 5, G.P. 369.

ensuring that the drafted men were the least productive members of the state, the amorphous demographic political elites attempted to define to best retain their political power and maintain social stability in the state. Therefore, for state leaders, “the selective [or classification] part of the law is infinitely more important than the drafting [or induction] part of it,” as Bickett explained to Crowder. The exemption should be determined by local “patriotic citizens who are free from political considerations” and therefore able to recognize and select “those who have the least to do at home.”¹²⁸ The level of input by individuals to the benefit of the state, of course, was a political determination itself. By selecting who would serve on local boards, Bickett and the state Council could define which men were categorized as the least productive. For Bickett and the state Council of Defense, patriotic citizens who could ably serve on local boards were men not currently in or running for political office and respected amongst the local elites. Essentially, they were the same group of men from business, the law, and education courted for service on the state and local Councils of Defense.

Crowder’s attempt to remove the power of local actors to decide who was selected for service and who stayed to serve their communities created a more fraught political situation for Bickett and the Council of Defense. Crowder’s approach created three main issues for Bickett and other political leaders in North Carolina. First, the sheriffs and clerks Crowder and the War Department wanted to manage exemptions were elected positions in North Carolina.¹²⁹ Serving on exemption boards was problematic for them, as well as the state Democratic party as a whole, with Bickett telling Crowder, “The conscientious discharge of their duty on exemption boards would probably result in their defeat at the next election.”¹³⁰ Such a system threatened the dominant political hegemony the Democrats had forcibly crafted in the South since the end of the

¹²⁸ Bickett to Crowder, 31 May 1917, Folder 5, G.P. 369.

¹²⁹ Bickett to Crowder, 28 May 1917, Folder 5, G.P. 369.

¹³⁰ Correspondence between Bickett and Crowder, 26-31 May 1917, Folder 5, G.P. 369; quote is from Bickett to Crowder, 28 May 1917, Folder 5, G.P. 369.

nineteenth century.¹³¹ For that reason, Bickett and the state Council of Defense were deliberate in whom they approached to serve on local boards. Wherever possible, they commissioned at least one Republican for each board to ensure shared political risk in the classification of conscripts.¹³² This makeup of local exemption boards allowed Bickett and the state Council of Defense to maintain state power despite this politically fraught issue of weighing in on the classification of registrants. In fact, addressing exemptions was one of the most active aspects of the Governor's interaction in the mobilization of military manpower during the war.¹³³

A second problematic feature in Crowder's original scheme for local boards involved the perception, expressed consistently by Bickett and Hill, that local community leaders could better understand the men registering for the draft and their particular situations, thus allowing for more accurate classification. If a distant district board under federal control managed exemptions, they would be unable to provide a true reckoning of individual situations. Removing exemptions from local hands also meant that Bickett and other political leaders would be challenged to directly influence the exemption process to match shifting local political winds in North Carolina.¹³⁴

A third issue for Bickett and state mobilizing authorities like the Council of Defense in Crowder's approach was the latter's conceptualization of overall manpower, and therefore how

¹³¹ Stephen David Kantrowitz, *Ben Tillman & the Reconstruction of White Supremacy* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 2-9; East Carolina University, "Politics of a Massacre," <http://core.ecu.edu/umc/wilmington/index.html>, accessed 24 April 2021; Wilmington Race Riot Commission, *1898 Wilmington Race Riot Report* (Raleigh, N.C.: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 2006), <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p249901coll22/id/5842>, accessed 24 April 2021.

¹³² Correspondence between Bickett and County Democrats, Folder 1, G.P. 370.

¹³³ "Gov. Bickett Last Night at Kinston," *Raleigh News & Observer*, 7 March 1918, Folder 3, G.P. 374. In one letter, Governor Bickett is clear where he stands on marriage and the duty of men either to support their families or be drafted: "It is my fixed purpose not to leave in the State of North Carolina a man within the draft age who does not habitually and cheerfully support his family." Bickett to Local Exemption Boards, 15 March 1918, Folder 3, G.P. 374; Bickett to Pate, 22 March 1918, Folder 3, G.P. 374.

¹³⁴ Bickett became quite directive, to the point that one Edgecombe local board member quit. Bickett to Wharton, 15 Feb 1918, Folder 2, G.P. 374; Bassett to Bickett, 22 Feb 1918, Folder 2, G.P. 374. This issue was eventually acknowledged by Crowder, though too late to adjust the system. See U.S. War Department, *Second Report*, 10.

conscription was structured. Crowder and the War Department initially viewed the balancing of American manpower as between two poles: military or industrial. Attempting to prevent the hobbling of military industries like munitions and shipbuilding, the federal government developed its classification system to pull men from non-essential sectors.¹³⁵ This military-industrial distinction missed the important agricultural labor element of North Carolina.¹³⁶ While Crowder's reports lumped agricultural labor into his prose with industrial labor, the classification system largely overlooked any exemptions for those working a family farm or unskilled farm labor necessary for larger agricultural endeavors.¹³⁷ Bickett and Hill pushed hard to include farm workers in exemption classification, attempting to decrease the impact to the state's economy and the political impact of drafting a disproportionate number of young men needed on the farms.¹³⁸ As will be discussed in the next chapter on resource mobilization, they were ultimately unsuccessful in preventing the drafting of large numbers of agricultural workers into uniform.

Governor Bickett and the North Carolina Council of Defense deliberately and consistently communicated to the federal government their concerns about how the state would meet their obligations for conscription.¹³⁹ Their main demand was the replacement of registration boards composed of elected officials by county-level boards led by private citizens not formally tied to state government or political party machines.¹⁴⁰ Bickett and the Council would ultimately

¹³⁵ "A balance must be struck and maintained between the military and the industrial needs of the Nation and the necessary sacrifice must be distributed with scientific accuracy and in such a way as to accomplish both purposes of the Nation." See U.S. War Department, *First Draft*, 13.

¹³⁶ Bickett to Crowder, 4 March 1918, Folder 3, G.P. 374.

¹³⁷ Later justification from the Provost Marshal General's Office was that the exemption for dependency provided "the protection to non-necessary industry, while not nearly so effective as that offered to necessary industry, was sufficient to prevent destruction." U.S. War Department, *Second Report*, 135-136.

¹³⁸ Laughinghouse to Grimes, 30 Aug 1917, Folder 378, Box 29, John Bryan Grimes Papers, Wilson Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C. (hereafter John Bryan Grimes Papers); Patterson to Bickett, 1 Oct 1917, Folder 1, G.P. 371; Bickett to Crowder, 4 Mar 1918, Folder 3, G.P. 374.

¹³⁹ North Carolina Adjutant General, *Annual Report, 1917-1918*, 239-240, 255-285; Correspondence between Bickett and Crowder, 26-31 May 1917, Folder 5, G.P. 369.

¹⁴⁰ North Carolina Adjutant General's Department, *Annual Report, 1917-1918*, 239

achieve this evolution in personnel as the state Selective Service System transitioned from registration boards to local boards that managed exemptions and the induction of conscripted men. The North Carolina Council of Defense was integral to these efforts to establish and manage new local boards, acting as the clearinghouse between the local boards and Bickett, as well as coordinating support for the local boards through the county Councils of Defense.¹⁴¹ In its coordinating role, the state Council provided guidance for the differentiation of duties between the local boards and the county Councils, as well as directed specific tasks to support the registration, exemption, and induction of men for conscription.¹⁴² Finally, the state Council of Defense generated, collected, and nominated men for appointment in the Selective Service System, including seats for the two District Boards in the state and the various advisory positions that provided expertise on labor and the appeals process.¹⁴³ Each of these roles performed by the North Carolina Council of Defense extended federal power into the state and increased the capability of the state to provide sufficient military manpower for the war.

On the other hand, in shaping the extension of federal power on the ground, the Council ensured the political and social hierarchies of North Carolina remained intact, circumscribing who served, both in the Selective Service System and in uniform through the draft itself.¹⁴⁴ The social and political power the Council wielded in conscription caused consternation in some areas of the state, most notably among people who supported Republicans and were trying to use exemptions from the draft as a wedge issue. Bickett and the state Council of Defense nonetheless

¹⁴¹ Hill to Morehead, 22 June 1917, Folder 2, Box 2, WWI 1.

¹⁴² Bickett to Hill, 5 Jan 1918, Folder 9, Box 2, WWI 1. For discussion on the differentiation of the work of local boards versus county Councils of Defense, see the series of letters from Nov 1917-July 1918 on the Councils of Defense supporting exemption boards, Folder 16, Box 9, WWI 1. A good example is a 23 Jul 1918 letter from Hill to McCormick about how local boards were directed by federal government but responsible to Governor Bickett, while the county Councils of Defense were directed and managed by the state Council of Defense. While sometimes the intersection of the two was confusing, it was at the state level that things were resolved.

¹⁴³ North Carolina Adjutant General's Department, *Annual Report, 1917-1918*, 239-240.

¹⁴⁴ Bickett to elites across the state, 2 Jun 1917, Folder 1, G.P. 370.

remained confident in the men that had been chosen for the local boards, saying it was their “abiding faith that you would do your duty without fear and without favor” and that their work should “be done on a plane of patriotism so high that no breadth of suspicion can reach it.”¹⁴⁵ The fact that Bickett and others controlled who was named to these positions bolstered this confidence.

The ways in which Bickett and the North Carolina Council of Defense re-structured the exemption and induction process illuminates the areas that state elites were most interested in controlling, specifically class and race. The issue of classification based upon dependency provides an exemplary case. The men who were chosen for local boards were instructed that their duty was to “supply men for the army while also keeping the community as tranquil and as stable as possible in the midst of war.”¹⁴⁶ Despite a stringent definition of dependency promulgated by the War Department that focused more on economic status than marriage, local boards enjoyed great autonomy as they lent shape to the process of exemption in practice.¹⁴⁷ In North Carolina, marriage largely determined exemptions, with 91% of married men getting an exemption, versus only 6% of single men.¹⁴⁸ As married men made up 54% of all registered men in the state, this emphasis quickly constrained the pool of men available for conscription.¹⁴⁹ Despite the large impact marriage status had on whether a man was drafted, this dynamic was largely acceptable, with most citizens viewing dependency as a viable reason to be exempted.¹⁵⁰ In all, 63% of

¹⁴⁵ Bickett to Local Boards, 10 Jul 1917, Folder 2, G.P. 370.

¹⁴⁶ James Hall, “Manhood, Duty, and Service: Conscription in North Carolina during the First World War,” in Matthew L. Downs and M. Ryan Floyd, eds., *The American South and the Great War, 1914-1924* (Baton Rouge, L.A.: Louisiana State University Press, 2018), 48.

¹⁴⁷ Hickel, “Justice and the Highest Kind of Equality,” 756-757.

¹⁴⁸ U.S. War Department, *Second Report*, 401-404; Hall, “Manhood, Duty, and Service,” 47; J.A. Taylor, “Final report from the registration and draft boards for Wilmington, N.C.,” p. 2, Folder 10, Box 4, WWI 3.

¹⁴⁹ U.S. War Department, *Second Report*, 401.

¹⁵⁰ Dorit Geva, “Different and Unequal? Breadwinning, Dependency Deferments, and the Gendered Origins of the U.S. Selective Service System,” *Armed Forces & Society* 37, no. 4 (October 2011): 598–618; Dorit Geva, “Dependency as a Keyword of the American Draft System and Persistence of Male-only Registration,” *Polity* 47, no. 2 (April 2015): 199-224.

registrants were not classified as Class I, or eligible to be drafted for military service, resulting in them being safe from conscription.¹⁵¹ The 58,411 North Carolinians who were drafted into the National Army during the war came exclusively from those classified as Class I.¹⁵² How men were classified largely determined whether they were drafted or not, making it the most important tool of control during the war – and a tool the Governor and state Council used deliberately to shape support by North Carolinians.

As conscription continued, exemptions for dependency underwent increasing scrutiny. Men identified as failing to support their dependents became a significant political and social issue in North Carolina. Such shirking offended the sensibilities of citizens in two ways. First, by their apparent willingness to evade their obligation to serve the nation. And second, by breaking with the social and moral norms of society by failing to support their families. In the first few months of 1918, Bickett and the state Council of Defense went on the offensive against men accused of “abandonment, non-support, abuse or infidelity,” pushing that such individuals be “sent to camp for failure to perform their duty in the home.”¹⁵³ There were few issues that provoked such righteous anger in Governor Bickett than exempted men who failed to support their families, leading him to declare that, “It is my fixed purpose not to leave in the State of North Carolina a man within the draft age who does not habitually and cheerfully support his family.”¹⁵⁴ Bickett would continually push local board officials and their supporting county Councils of Defense to ensure future classification of men into Class I were solely made up of “single men and married men who do not support their families.”¹⁵⁵ This prodding had an effect,

¹⁵¹ North Carolina Adjutant General’s Department, *Annual Report, 1917-1918*, 241.

¹⁵² North Carolina Adjutant General’s Department, *Annual Report, 1917-1918*, 247.

¹⁵³ Kuykendall, “Report of the Local Exemption Board,” p. 4, Folder 1, Box 2, WWI 3.

¹⁵⁴ Bickett to Morehead City Local Board, 15 Mar 1918, Folder 3, G.P. 374.

¹⁵⁵ Bickett to Local Boards, 8 Feb 1918, Folder 2, G.P. 374; Bickett to Wharton, 15 Feb 1917, Folder 2, G.P. 374.

demonstrated by the action of one local board in Winston-Salem that re-classified 150 men into Class I and sent them to camp.¹⁵⁶

Like most issues affecting mobilization in North Carolina, the re-classification of men based on perceptions of non-support were affected by racial views. For instance, the views the secretary of the local board in Winston-Salem expressed in his final report to the state Council of Defense exemplified widespread opinion among white officials. Relating a situation in his county involving Black children born out of wedlock and a man “propagating a race of illegitimates,” the secretary relates from his “experience on the Local Board with dependency negro cases” that “at least ten percent of the adult negro population in industrial centers have little, or no idea of, or regard for morality” which will create a race “which will strike deep into the very heart of the national life of the South.”¹⁵⁷ Such racist views existed across the state, suggesting that classification as a whole, and re-classification in particular, was impacted by the men running the Selective Service System at the local level – men chosen by the North Carolina Council of Defense.¹⁵⁸

The North Carolina Council of Defense also took a direct role in managing the state response to men who failed to participate in the Selective Service process. The Selective Service Regulations categorized such men as “delinquents” and “deserters.” Delinquents included “registrants who fail to return their questionnaires, or who fail to report for physical examination, or who cannot be located.”¹⁵⁹ These men were sought out by the local board, with the help of local law enforcement and the County Council of Defense, to ensure they were aware of their obligations to register and complete the process of classification, an approach that was largely

¹⁵⁶ Kuykendall, “Report of the Local Exemption Board,” pp. 4, 110, Folder 1, Box 2, WWI 3.

¹⁵⁷ Kuykendall, “Report of the Local Exemption Board,” pp. 5, 162-169, Folder 1, Box 2, WWI 3.

¹⁵⁸ Taylor, “Final report,” pp. 2-3, Folder 10, Box 4, WWI 3.

¹⁵⁹ United States, Congress, Selective Service Act, Section 131.

successful.¹⁶⁰ The Council viewed the men who thwarted the conscription system as threats to the capability of the state to meet its military requirements. Delinquents and deserters also served as a social and political boundary that the Council had to consistently push against to ensure such pushback, even if small, did not expand over time.

If those classified as delinquents could not be found or convinced to support the process, they joined the ranks of deserters, or as the Selective Service Act defined them: “Persons inducted into military service failing to report to a Local Board for transportation to a mobilization camp when directed to do so, or who fail to entrain, or who absent themselves from entrainment.”¹⁶¹ Deserters were automatically placed by the local board into Class I, and law enforcement was empowered to detain them and send them to camp. Throughout the war, there were between four- and five-thousand delinquents and deserters in North Carolina.¹⁶² The eastern part of the state, which was better connected by serviceable roads, railways, and the postal service, only accounted for about ten percent of those numbers, with the majority resolved through induction.¹⁶³ This meant that those who were delinquent or deserted were found and sent to training camps for military service. Most delinquency and desertion cases occurred in the western part of the state. This area was less serviced by good roads, rail lines, and the post than the rest of the state; it contained many who had little love for the Democratic Party, and it had a history of pushing back against conscription or supporting war.¹⁶⁴ The lack of infrastructure meant that some men in the western part of the state were unaware of their obligations under the Selective Service Act, or by political choice, had chosen to take a stand against what they viewed as “Wilson’s War,” or

¹⁶⁰ U.S. War Department, *Second Report*, 212.

¹⁶¹ United States, Congress, Selective Service Act, Section 131.

¹⁶² North Carolina Adjutant General’s Department, *Annual Report, 1917-1918*, 244; Lemmon, *North Carolina’s Role in the First World War*, 55.

¹⁶³ North Carolina Council of Defense, “Prosecutions Under Selective Service and Espionage Acts, Eastern District of North Carolina, July 1, 1917 - Jul 1, 1918,” Folder 14, Box 11, WWI 1.

¹⁶⁴ Keith, *Rich Man’s War*, 182-183; Richard Bardolph, “Inconstant Rebels: Desertion of North Carolina Troops in the Civil War,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 41, no. 2 (April 1964): 163-189.

hoped to ride out the war by remaining inconspicuous in the mountains and the more rural areas.¹⁶⁵

Governor Bickett and Hill took a public stance toward white deserters that focused on leniency and understanding, blaming any delinquency or desertion by North Carolinians on ignorance. To address such issues in the state, they developed both preventative and reactive approaches, focused on local officials solving the issues.¹⁶⁶ Governor Bickett and the state Council developed four preventative measures. First, they requested men from across the state to speak in public places about the reasons for entering the First World War and the obligations of state citizens under the Selective Service Act. Second, the Council employed legal committees at the local boards to clearly explain what was expected of the men registering for the draft and when inducted. Third, Bickett and Hill, as well as selected other speakers who were popular in the state, visited camps to speak to soldiers to ensure they did not desert. And fourth, Bickett and the Council requested family members be careful when writing to their sons in camp about the hardships at home to prevent soldiers from feeling like they needed to desert to support their families.¹⁶⁷ Reactive approaches taken by Bickett and the state Council of Defense centered on convincing those who were delinquent or deserted that if they surrendered themselves, they would not be punished. The enlistment of family members was the most effective approach in carrying this message.¹⁶⁸ This approach was also backed by the mustering of the Home Guard and requesting the employment of federal troops, if Bickett or the Council of Defense thought violence was possible.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Keith, *Rich Man's War*, 182-183

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 183.

¹⁶⁷ Pratt, "History of the North Carolina Council of Defense," 484-492

¹⁶⁸ In this role, the North Carolina Council of Defense acted as a broad coordinator and policymaker for desertion policies. Hill to County Chairmen, 16 July 1918, Folder 2, Box 1, WWI 1; Pratt, "History of the North Carolina Council of Defense," 487-488.

¹⁶⁹ Bickett to Crowder, 27 June 1918, Folder 2, G.P. 375.

The most dramatic example of the reactive approach, as well as North Carolina's focus on leniency, came in June of 1918 when a handful of deserters in Ashe County banded together, fled into the mountains, and thwarted all attempts at capture, at times shooting at the law enforcement sent to apprehend them. Writing to Crowder about the issue, Bickett feared the "situation [was] fraught with present danger and untold future evil."¹⁷⁰ Fearing such activities would spread if not addressed, Bickett ordered his Adjutant General to call forth the local Home Guard and go command the situation himself. At the same time, he wrote to Crowder and requested federal troops be sent to the area and placed on standby, for "If they are to be killed then it ought to be done by the Federal authorities and by troops who do not live in that section."¹⁷¹ Generally wary of federal intrusion into state affairs, Bickett was more than willing to cede some limited, temporary authority to the federal government in return for avoiding blame over violently compelling recalcitrant state citizens into service.

Such a deployment of federal troops was ultimately unnecessary, as the state Council of Defense, according to Hill, "enlisted the aid of some volunteer helpers" in the county, and Bickett traveled to the area to entreat the family members of the deserters to help talk them down from the mountains.¹⁷² In the end, writing in their official report of Selective Service, General Crowder and the War Department determined that, "the method [undertaken by Bickett and Hill] was effective; nearly every delinquent came down from the mountains and was sent to camp."¹⁷³ Throughout the crisis, as well as in a few other more minor instances, Bickett and Hill expressed their belief that "Ignorance and misinformation is at the bottom of all this trouble and all this shame," and that "the [state] Council thought that each county might do a nobly fine piece of

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Hill to County Chairmen, 16 Jul 1918, Folder 10, Box 13, WWI 1; Hill to County Chairmen, 16 July 1917, Folder 4, Box 1, WWI 1; correspondence between local officials and Bickett, 24-29 June 1918, Folder 2, G.P. 375; McCain to Bickett, 1 July 1918, Folder 3, G.P. 375.

¹⁷³ U.S. War Department, *Second Report*, 212.

service in trying to induce, by friendly means, the families of these men to have them come forward voluntarily and comply with the law.”¹⁷⁴ The state Council of Defense was crucial in not only developing this policy of leniency toward desertion in the state, but also by connecting with local individuals and officials to save deserters from harsher punishment, as well as protecting the positive image of the state in regards to loyalty.

Like dependency and other issues regarding conscription, North Carolina’s lenient approach to deserters had distinct racial boundaries. In all the recorded cases of desertion in which local and state officials went out of their way to ensure a calm outcome and leniency, the deserters were white men. Black men were given far less benefit of the doubt. There are no recorded events of local and state officials actively engaging the families of Black deserters. Additionally, when addressing the desertion of Black men in letters and reports, the language shifts from one of understanding to one of accusation. For example, in Winston-Salem, which had an even split of white and Black registrants for the draft, the cases of delinquency and desertion were starkly different, with the secretary recording 103 Black cases to 9 white and ascribing the reason to the discrepancy as to the fact that Black men “cared little, knew less and cared nothing for the policies and purposes of their Government.”¹⁷⁵ Such a characterization was offered despite the fact that Black leaders throughout the state, including ministers, university officials, and business elites, time and again professed loyalty and support for the war and North Carolina’s role in it.¹⁷⁶ But not all local boards were as overtly racist in their treatment of Black men when found delinquent or having deserted. And some boards, for example, did attribute such infractions

¹⁷⁴ Bickett remarks to Ashe County gathering, 29 Jun 1918, Folder 2, G.P. 375; Hill to County Chairmen, 16 Jul 1918, Folder 10, Box 13, WWI 1.

¹⁷⁵ Kuykendall, “Report of the Local Exemption Board,” p. 148-152, 170, Folder 1, Box 2, WWI 3. Even more incriminating as to the attitude of this local board official was a “Humorous” story included in his official report that detailed all the ways local Black men supposedly tried to trick the local board into exempting them, and how the smarter white officials caught them and put them into Class I, pp. 162-169.

¹⁷⁶ See, for instance, Dudley to Bickett, 3 Apr 1917, Folder 4, G.P. 369; Black Citizens of Greensboro to Bickett, 9 Apr 1917, Folder 4, G.P. 369; and Shaw University Students to Bickett, 27 Apr 1917, Folder 4, G.P. 369.

as “due more to ignorance than to design,” even as they were not as lenient with African American deserters as with white ones.¹⁷⁷

Conclusion

By the last draft for military service in September 1918, the North Carolina Council of Defense and the federal government’s conscription machinery was integrated down to the county level, making the system of boards and committees in the state “the shock absorbers in the engine of war,”¹⁷⁸ as Bickett once stated. The structuring of this system was created and managed by the state Council, serving as the intermediary organization capable of integrating public and private efforts to harness the state’s societal resources and translate them into national military power. The Council accomplished this by organizing and supporting the deployment of state National Guard forces, establishing training bases for drafted soldiers, and building the state’s Selective Service System to register and draft men into the National Army. Their efforts expanded the power of the national government down to the local level, as well as increased the capacity and capability of the state and nation for war. The ability of the state, led by the North Carolina Council of Defense, to generate sufficient military capability illuminates the strength of the American associational state – the United States did not need a strong centralized national state to obtain the military manpower it needed for a global and industrial conflict.

While expanding the power of the national government, the North Carolina Council of Defense closely controlled the state’s participation and shaped how federal requirements for the military mobilization were executed. Through the politics of inclusion and exclusion, the Council navigated the social and political cleavages in the state. Hill and his Council ensured the strategic placement of men on local draft boards and as commanders of units predominantly composed of

¹⁷⁷ Taylor, “Final report,” p. 2, Folder 10, Box 4, WWI 3.

¹⁷⁸ Thomas Bickett, “Message to the General Assembly of 1919,” Folder 1, G.P. 380.

North Carolinians, as well as the decisions of who could and could not serve in uniform. Through these actions, the Council mediated, influenced, and ultimately controlled mobilization activities to address the concerns of state elites and their white constituents, ensuring the continuity of the state's Democrat-led white supremacist order during and following the war.

Chapter 3:

“Let Us Not Fail to Supply...Every Necessity for Battle”: Resource Mobilization & the North Carolina Council of Defense¹

In June 1918, North Carolina’s Food Administrator, Henry Allison Page, met with city and county officials responsible for reducing consumption and increasing the production of food in the state. Bluntly laying forth his approach, Page proclaimed that by “Setting our eyes on results that are desirable, we undertake to get these results by the shortest route possible and whether all these means are...absolutely sustainable in a court of law we do not ask ourself [sic].”² A farmer, former representative in the North Carolina General Assembly, and the state Council of Defense-chosen representative of the national Food Administration in North Carolina, Page summarized the dramatic actions of leaders throughout the state in 1917-18.³ Challenged by the ever-increasing need for food, labor, fuel, and money for the war effort – nationally and within North Carolina itself – the ability of the state government to coordinate resource management was critical to the overall war effort. It was also crucial to maintaining the social and political stability of North Carolina in the dynamic and challenging time of war. Balancing the desires of the federal government and the interests of North Carolina’s political and business elites required robust coordination to manage the mobilization, a task undertaken by the North Carolina Council of Defense.

¹ North Carolina Council of Defense, *Plan of Organization* (Raleigh, N.C.: Commercial Printing Company, 1917), 11.

² North Carolina Food Administration, Notes from the Conference with County and City Food Administrators, Raleigh, N.C., 18-19 June 1918, p. 1, Folder 9, Box 9, WWI 8.

³ Henry Page was also the younger brother to both Walter Hines Page, President Wilson’s ambassador to the United Kingdom, and Robert Newton Page, former U.S. Congressman from North Carolina and member of the Executive Committee of the North Carolina Council of Defense.

The North Carolina Council of Defense became the central organizational structure for mobilizing and managing food, labor, fuel, and financial resources within the state during the First World War. Its centrality came from its intermediary position in the wartime associational state, allowing the Council to mediate between the national government and local citizens, as well as negotiate and integrate the wartime work of North Carolina's organized society. Like its efforts to mobilize military manpower, the Council's management of resource mobilization resulted in the state effectively expanding its capability to support the national state in wartime. However, the control over appointments and the mobilization of volunteers also allowed the North Carolina Council of Defense to ensure the activities undertaken in the state were beneficial to local social and political interests. When it came to resource management, the Council exercised its role by strategically selecting leaders for the state and federal agencies addressing resource mobilization, as well as controlling access to citizens that could staff and conduct the work of the federal government on the ground.

Upon entry of the United States into the war, the federal government struggled to come to grips with the national mobilization, particularly regarding food and fuel conservation, labor, war financing, and the organization of volunteers. Its efforts fractured as federal departments established parallel mechanisms to respond to the crisis. Additionally, the Council of National Defense was unable to pull together the existing agencies to create a united national effort, instead creating numerous new emergency agencies – including the Food and Fuel Administrations, the War Industries Board, and the National War Labor Board – that each worked on the areas most important to their individual agency's concerns.⁴ The fracturing of the federal

⁴ Frank M. Surface and Raymond L. Bland, *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period: Operations of the Organizations Under the Direction of Herbert Hoover 1914 to 1924* (Stanford, C.A.: Stanford University Press, 1931); Robert D. Cuff, *The War Industries Board: Business-Government Relations during World War I* (Baltimore, M.D.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press,

government's mobilization efforts led to competition between different agencies for manpower and support, particularly in the states, where the conservation and production of resources – from food to fuel to financing – occurred. It also caused increased confusion and anxiety as business leaders, labor, and the state government struggled to balance competing requirements, preferences, and expectations at the same time as they were being asked by multiple federal agencies to employ a scarce labor supply to produce more and consume less.

The North Carolina Council of Defense was short of manpower for its own efforts at military mobilization and resource management. The Council's members were also concerned that federal agencies would bypass the state and conduct activities under their own power. In response, the Council readily agreed to support federal emergency organizations. As federal agencies began establishing state offices, Chair D.H. Hill and the members of the Council of Defense carefully selected individuals they could trust who were appointed as the representatives of federal agencies in the state. These individuals, from state administrators to the heads of major resource management efforts, were chosen from state government and the state's organized society specifically to negotiate federal requirements and state preferences.⁵

The nomination of members of the state's elites for special service was not new. According to Governor Thomas Bickett, it was common practice for state agencies to nominate one or more individuals for duties such as representing the state at regional conventions or with

1982); Valerie Jean Conner, *The National War Labor Board: Stability, Social Justice, and the Voluntary State in World War I* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1983); William J. Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home: Civilian Mobilization, Wartime Federalism, and the Council of National Defense, 1917-1919* (Westport, C.T.: Greenwood Press, 1984); Avner Offer, *The First World War: An Agrarian Interpretation* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁵ The concept of strategic choice in personnel and its impacts on the extension of state power into private channels can be found in the work of Emma Teitelman, including Emma Teitelman, "Class and State in the Era of Reconstruction," presentation, Organization of American Historians Annual Conference, Public-Private Governance in U.S. History Panel, 18 Apr 2021.

private and public national organizations. When this happened, the Governor's office appointed these individuals for service, a precedent that was passed on to the North Carolina Council of Defense at its founding.⁶ Throughout the war, the state Council, according to Hill, managed the "selection of administrative officers for the Federal Government and aid[ed] them in their organizations...[by furnishing] each of these organizations with a chairman for county work."⁷ Selecting leaders for resource management allowed the Council to influence all federal, state, and local so-called "cooperative services" such as food, labor, fuel, and finance.⁸ Additionally, the Council's choices ensured private economic interests in the state, from farmers and merchants to industrial business and financial interests, were managed directly by those with expertise in those areas.⁹ Employing such expertise to lead the resource management efforts in the state tapped into "private sources of administration, cooperative agreements, and great propaganda crusades for conservation and sacrifice,"¹⁰ to quote Robert Cuff, a leading scholar of U.S. wartime mobilization. Such appointments also put the interests of the state in the hands of private individuals tied to the political elite, further tightening the integration of federal agencies, the state government, and organized society in North Carolina during the mobilization.

⁶ Bickett to Alexander, 16 Oct 1917, Folder 1, G.P. 371; Robinson, "Monthly Report, 19 Nov 1917," Folder 3, Box 6, Robinson Papers.

⁷ Hill to Pate, 3 May 1918, Folder 4, Box 3, WWI 1. In addition to linking national agencies to chairmen on county Councils of Defense, the North Carolina Council of Defense worked to consolidate much of the execution of resource management at the county level, requesting "the fuel and food administrators, the labor reserve forces, and the War Savings people be grouped together in our County Councils into one solid organization...This would give us a compact organization, all in touch with one another and each knowing what the other was doing and each co-operating with the other," Hill to Armstrong, 20 Mar 1918, Folder 7, Box 11, WWI 1; Hill to Porter, 29 Sep 1917, Folder 9, Box 19, WWI 1.

⁸ North Carolina Council of Defense, *First Annual Report of the North Carolina Council of Defense, 1918* (Raleigh, N.C.: Commercial Printing Company, 1918), 10-11.

⁹ While speaking of the federal level, Robert Cuff addressed the need for "technical and specialized knowledge" in the management of mobilization activities, Robert D. Cuff, "We Band of Brothers – Woodrow Wilson's War Managers," *Canadian Review of American Studies* 5, no. 2 (Fall 1974): 138; Kennedy, *Over Here*, 120-121.

¹⁰ Robert D. Cuff, "Herbert Hoover: The Ideology of Voluntarism and War Organization During the Great War," *The Journal of American History* 64, no. 2 (September 1977): 359.

While the men and women whom the North Carolina Council of Defense placed into these positions took guidance from Washington and pushed forward the agenda of the national government, they were far from, as historian David Bettez has suggested, “an encroaching federal presence” in the daily lives of the average person or harbingers of “substantial government intrusion.”¹¹ Instead, they were selected by the state Council of Defense to represent their interests, and they worked as such, within the social and political milieu of a wartime North Carolina. In this way, the North Carolina Council of Defense shaped activities in the state to expand national capability for resource mobilization, while also ensuring the continued dominance of the extant economic, social, and political power structures in the state.

In addition to the strategic placement of state leaders in federal wartime agencies, the North Carolina Council of Defense co-opted federal resource management efforts in the state through its control of volunteer manpower. Devoid of its own personnel outside of Washington, D.C., most federal agencies relied heavily on state cooperation and state-level organization to effectively project its power down to the county and community level. The provision of individuals to conduct mobilization activities for the national government was a key driver in incorporating states and organized society in mobilization activities through the associational state. It would also become a primary task of the state Council during the war.¹² The dependence of the federal government on state manpower, according to state Food Administrator Page, was exacerbated by the organizational efforts undertaken by the Council of Defense to integrate citizens into its various mobilization activities, and in the process reduce “confusion in multiplicity of county organizations [created by national, state, and local actors] and to fuse and

¹¹ David J. Bettez, *Kentucky and the Great War: World War I on the Home Front* (Lexington, K.Y.: University Press of Kentucky, 2016), 161.

¹² Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 3-16.

co-relate existing organizations.”¹³ Manpower in support of mobilization was a finite resource, particularly in a state like North Carolina where the population was rural, dispersed, and lacking in robust transportation infrastructure.¹⁴ The federal government needed the state Council of Defense to accomplish its mobilization goals regarding resource management.

Resource mobilization was heavily shaped by state-level interventions and influence, both in terms of the individuals chosen to lead the federal agencies in North Carolina and the application of state citizens to mobilization activities.¹⁵ Like military mobilization, the agency of state-level actors heavily influenced resource management during the war. In the end, the increase in state capability to manage resources also improved the ability of the national government to produce, conserve, and apply resources for the war, again showing the power of the American associational state and its use of infrastructural power in wartime.

This chapter’s analysis begins in North Carolina as the state attempted to manage food challenges brought on by the First World War. Experiencing shortages even before entering the war, Governor Bickett established a Food Conservation Commission, which set the foundation for how the state Council of Defense and the federal Food Administration would address food conservation and production. The story continues with the management of labor in North Carolina, which was heavily influenced by landowners, businessmen, and manufacturers. These

¹³ Page to Hoover, 18 Sep 1917, Folder 4, Box 2, WWI 8

¹⁴ Increasing state transportation infrastructure was a key promise of Governor Bickett when he was elected in 1912, and an item Joseph Hyde Pratt and others tied to the North Carolina Council of Defense advocated for during and after the war, Thomas W. Bickett, *Inaugural Address of T.W. Bickett, Governor of North Carolina* (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1917), Folder 1, G.P. 369; Folders 54 and 55, Box 12, Joseph Hyde Pratt Papers, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C. (hereafter Pratt Papers).

¹⁵ This is not substantially addressed in the previous historiography, which focuses on federal centralization, Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 41, 200; Kennedy, *Over Here*, 117. See also Sheldon D. Pollack, *War, Revenue, and State Building: Financing the Development of the American State* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2009); Gerald E. Shenk, *“Work or Fight!”: Race, Gender, and the Draft in World War One* (New York, N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Conner, *The National War Labor Board*; Maxcy Robson Dickson, *The Food Front in World War I* (Washington, D.C.: Monumental Printing Company, 1944); William C. Mullendore, *History of the United States Food Administration, 1917-1919* (Stanford, C.A.: Stanford University Press, 1941); Surface and Bland, *American Food in the World War*.

business elites pushed state leaders to control the movement and employment of labor, particularly Black workers, but also white men who failed to live up to the ideology of Selective Service. The chapter closes by analyzing the drive for efficiency in fuel use and the large popular mobilization in support of war financing. In all these areas, the North Carolina Council of Defense strove hard to co-opt federal agencies' growing interest in state activities, while supporting the increase of the federal government's capability to resource the war.

Feeding the War – Food Conservation and Production in North Carolina

As Frank Surface and Raymond Bland, members of the U.S. Food Administration, relate, the outbreak of war in 1914 and the subsequent years of conflict in Europe led to “heavy and uncontrolled demand” for food on that continent, dramatically increasing the need for American foodstuffs.¹⁶ The shortage of food quickly led to both sides of the European conflict placing blockades on the other to try and exhaust their enemies, with Britain preventing any food reaching Germany from the United States, while the latter twice undertook submarine campaigns to interdict shipments headed to the United Kingdom and France. The reinstatement of submarine warfare by Germany contributed to the United States' entry into war in 1917 in support of the Allies.¹⁷

According to historian Elizabeth Cafer du Plessis, the food situation within the United States, even prior to the military mobilization in the second half of 1917, threatened social, political, and economic stability in the country as “Europe's extraordinary food demands,

¹⁶ Surface and Bland, *American Food in the World War*, 15; Kennedy, *Over Here*, 117.

¹⁷ For more on the role of food in the First World War, see Helen Zoe Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food: Self-Control, Science, and the Rise of Modern American Eating in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Elizabeth Cafer du Plessis, “Meatless Days and Sleepless Nights: Food, Agriculture, and Environment in World War I America,” PhD diss. (Bloomington, I.N., Indiana University, 2009), 2; Belinda J. Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Offer, *The First World War*.

consumers' need for affordable food, farmers' need to earn a living, and environmental limits to production" came into conflict.¹⁸ Additionally, the normal flows of products from food-rich states in the Midwest and Great Plains to the large industrial areas of the Northeast and cash crop states in the South were disrupted as higher prices pulled American foodstuffs to Europe. These negative trends were heightened as the country experienced a significant downturn in its 1916 crop yield, forcing local, state, and national governments to consider ways to conserve food and increase the production of food crops in preparation for a more productive year in 1917.¹⁹

From April to June 1917, Bickett attempted to prepare for the impacts of war on the state without any specific guidance or direction from the federal government. Bickett focused first on an area that was an extension of his initial agenda when ascending to office in 1912: the rural economy and agriculture.²⁰ Agriculture remained a dominant element in the state's economy, though it had evolved due to increased urbanization and industrialization following the Civil War and the abolition of slavery.²¹ Even before the outbreak of war, Bickett and the agricultural elite that dominated state and local governments recognized that food would increasingly be needed, and not just by the peoples of Europe.²² This recognition ran counter to the direction of the state's agricultural transformation. Since the late nineteenth century, North Carolina's farmers shifted from subsistence farming and the growing of foodstuffs toward cash crops, as tobacco and cotton increased in profitability.²³ For that reason, the state had to import food from other parts of the

¹⁸ du Plessis, "Meatless Days and Sleepless Nights," vii.

¹⁹ Surface and Bland, *American Food in the World War*, 15; Mullendore, *History of the United States Food Administration*, 3, 7, 51-52; Ellis W. Hawley, *The Great War and the Search for Modern Order* (Prospect Heights, I.L.: Waveland Press, Inc., 1992), 21; Marc Allen Eisner, *From Warfare State to Welfare State: World War I, Compensatory State-Building, and the Limits of the Modern Order* (University Park, P.A.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 67.

²⁰ Bickett, *Inaugural Address*, Folder 1, Box G.P. 369.

²¹ Milton Ready, *The Tar Heel State: A New History of North Carolina* (Columbia, S.C.: The University of South Carolina Press, 2020), 197-211.

²² Santford Martin and R.B. House, eds., *Public Letters and Papers of Thomas Walter Bickett, Governor of North Carolina, 1917-1921* (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1923), 124.

²³ Ready, *The Tar Heel State*, 218.

country, a situation that would become increasingly difficult as requirements to feed an expanded American army took precedence.²⁴ State leaders recognized the danger in this situation, pushing local men and women to greater effort in food production. As prominent New Haven County landowner and agriculturalist Hugh McRae identified, “The great nations of the world are wearing each other out by a very slow process, and when a condition of almost complete exhaustion is reached, the country which can best feed its population and its army will dictate the terms of peace.”²⁵ To address the dire assessments of the food situation in the state, Bickett created a State Food Conservation Commission in April 1917 to organize county commissions and integrate them into state agricultural efforts to encourage agricultural production and conservation.²⁶ It was hoped that such organization would “secure an increased acreage and an increased production per acre of all food and feed products in every way possible.”²⁷

The North Carolina Food Conservation Commission was provided no authority or state funding, as it was created after the close of the 1917 session of the General Assembly. The Commission was an amalgamation of state employees, leaders of state interest groups, and volunteers at the state and local levels. The Governor himself led the Commission, but the state’s Commissioner of Agriculture, William A. Graham, was its primary manager. Other officials appointed to manage the effort included the director of the Agriculture Extension Service, B.W. Kilgore; the president of the State College of Agriculture and Engineering, W.C. Riddick; the director of the Home Demonstration and Canning Club Work, Jane S. McKimmon; the director of Farm Demonstration Work in the state, C.R. Hudson; the president of the Farmers’ Union, Dr.

²⁴ Hood to Bickett, 6 April 1917, Folder 2, Box 1, WWI 8.

²⁵ Hugh McRae, “Address to a mass meeting on 14 Jun 1917 under the auspices of the Food Conservation Commission of New Hanover,” Folder 14, Box 22, WWI 1. The sentiment that food was crucial to national security and victory in the war is covered well by Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food*.

²⁶ Wright to Bickett, 25 Jan 1917, Folder 1, Box 1, WWI 8; Hood to Bickett, 6 Apr 1917, Folder 2, Box 1, WWI 8; Lingle to Bickett, 14 Apr 1917, Folder 2, Box 1, WWI 8; Lucas to the *Raleigh News & Observer*, 14 Aug 1917, Folder 2, Box 2, WWI 8.

²⁷ Lucas to Minnesota Commission of Public Safety, 15 May 1917, Folder 9, Box 1, WWI 8.

H.Q. Alexander; and the president of the State Farmers' Convention, John Paul Lucas, who acted as the executive secretary of the Commission.²⁸ The selection of these individuals shows the integrated public-private nature of food management in the state. It also illuminates the political dynamics at play, with Democratic political appointees, agricultural interest groups, and professional experts all being pulled into resource management. Beyond the leaders of the organization, the Commission worked through existing subordinate organizations at the county and local level, including local school superintendents, farm demonstration and home demonstration agents, and representatives of each school to penetrate every neighborhood in the state.²⁹ Eventually subsumed by the U.S. Food Administration in September of 1917, the North Carolina Food Conservation Commission's approach to organization would serve as a template followed by later state mobilization organizations.³⁰

Beginning in July, the state Council of Defense moved to support the Food Conservation Commission, linking recently formed subordinate county Councils of Defense with personnel from the state Agricultural Department and county demonstration and extension workers.³¹ This was coordinated through the state Council's Committee for Conservation and Economy, chaired by B.W. Kilgore, who, in addition to directing the state Extension Program, also simultaneously

²⁸ Lucas to Ministers of North Carolina, May 1917, Folder 9, Box 1, WWI 8; B.W. Kilgore, "Report of the Director of the Experiment Station and the Extension Service," 18 May 1917, Folder 5, G.P. 369; Kilgore to Hill, 12 Jun 1917, Folder 8, Box 8, WWI 1; North Carolina Council of Defense, *First Annual Report*, 16. The Extension Service was also tied to the College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts in Raleigh (now North Carolina State), which leveraged academic expertise. For a history of agricultural extension work prior to the Smith-Lever Act, see Roy V. Scott, *The Reluctant Farmer: The Rise of Agricultural Extension to 1914* (Urbana, I.L.: University of Illinois Press, 1970); Alan I. Marcus, *Agricultural Science and the Quest for Legitimacy: Farmers, Agricultural Colleges, and Experiment Stations, 1870-1890* (Ames, I.A.: State University Press, 1985), 213-214.

²⁹ Lucas to Ministers of North Carolina, May 1917, Folder 9, Box 1, WWI 8.

³⁰ Lucas to County Commissioners, Folder 2, Box 2, WWI 8; Lucas to County Food Conservation Committees, 24 Apr 1917, Folder 4, G.P. 369; Lucas to Naftzger, 8 May 1917, Folder 8, Box 1, WWI 8; "Mrs. M'Kimmon is on Food Board," *Raleigh News & Observer*, 10 May 1917, Folder 30, Box 11, WWI 2.

³¹ Hill to Kilgore, 3 Jul 1917, Folder 8, Box 8, WWI 1; Hill to Hall, 26 Jul 1917, Folder 7, Box 22, WWI 1; North Carolina Council of Defense, *First Annual Report*, 10; Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 102-103.

served as the director of the state Cooperative Farm Demonstration Division of the Department of Agriculture and as a member of the Food Conservation Commission. This convergence of public and private within the state Council of Defense was a key indicator of its intermediary status.³²

The focus of the North Carolina Council of Defense and the Food Conservation Commission was to reduce food waste and general consumption in the state. They did this by reaching out to women, who largely dictated the purchase and use of food in North Carolina homes. The Woman's Committee of the Council of Defense led the Council's efforts to communicate with women, due to their experience and ability to speak to their fellow women, as well as their more effective organization efforts.³³ Beyond women, those running food conservation efforts also pushed for the integration of Black citizens for their "whole-souled cooperation," in the words of North Carolina Council member James Sprunt, and reached out to farmers in "public eating-places and the distribution trades" to convince them that such "conservation [w]as a national service."³⁴ Reaching out to Black citizens to conserve food was an approach that also appealed to Governor Bickett, who saw this issue as a matter of loyalty. According to Bickett, not following government direction in this area was "gross disloyalty...and may lead to unnecessary slaughter of our boys who are on the firing line" because it would extend

³² David B. Danbom argues that the First World War effectively extended the federal bureaucratic machinery into places it had not previously existed through county extension agents, which were partially funded by the federal government. This is true, but that increase in federal capability was mediated and influenced by state actors, including the Council of Defense, which drove the efforts. David B. Danbom, "The Agricultural Extension System and the First World War," *The Historian* 41, no. 2 (February 1979): 315-331.

³³ "Patriotic Work in New Hanover," *Commercial Bulletin: Publication of the Chamber of Commerce, Wilmington* 1, no. 12 (Nov 1917), 4; Joseph Hyde Pratt, "History of the North Carolina Council of Defense," pp. 291-293; Celia Malone Kingsbury, *For Home and Country: World War I Propaganda on the Home Front* (Lincoln, N.E.: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 27-65; Porter to Wilson, 22 Aug 1917, Folder 4, Box 2, WWI 1.

³⁴ Sprunt to McCormick, 14 Nov 1917, Folder 26, Box 9, WWI 2; Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: Years of Adventure, 1874-1920* (New York, N.Y.: Macmillan Company, 1951), 244; McCormick to Sprunt, 13 Nov 1917, and McCormick to the New Hanover County Council of Defense, 13 Nov 1917, Folder 26, Box 9, WWI 2; James Sprunt, "New Hanover County War Activities Report," p. 5, Folder 1, Box 10, WWI 2.

the war.³⁵ The integration of African American citizens in food management was seen as non-threatening to the state's white supremacist socio-political order, as such work was viewed by white leaders as the 'proper' place of Black citizens from the time such men and women had been forcibly imported to work in North Carolina's fields, through to the First World War when some African American farmers owned their own small farms, or more frequently, worked as tenant farmers or other agricultural laborers for white land owners. Acceptance of Black citizens in wartime conservation and production led to food management becoming one of the few areas for which state leaders directly and robustly engaged Black communities for support.³⁶

Food conservation efforts drove an increase in training and support for the preservation of foods, primarily through canning. Such conservation was an area that generated a large amount of support from the women of North Carolina, in no small part due to the diligent efforts of Jane S. McKimmon, the director of Home Economics at the state Department of Agriculture, a member of the Conservation and Economy Committee of the state Council of Defense, and the chair of the state Woman's Committee's Food Administration Committee.³⁷ "General" McKimmon traveled throughout the state training women to preserve foods, growing membership in canning clubs from under 500 members in 1912 when she began to over 14,000 people just before the war ended in 1918. This dramatic expansion resulted in almost 9 million containers of vegetables and fruits preserved and over 550,000 pounds of dried produce in 1918, an increase from 70,000 containers in 1912 to 680,000 containers in 1916.³⁸ The increased capability of the

³⁵ Bickett to Olive, 4 Mar 1918, Folder 1, P.C. 216.2.

³⁶ White leaders did not, however, allow any kind of organizing of, or by, Black citizens. Their engagements with African American communities focused on communicating needs and expecting Black farmers to obey.

³⁷ McKimmon's personal papers provide an interesting look at her professional persona, as it contains decades of work in rural outreach and food conservation: Jane S. McKimmon Papers, 1910-1945, P.C. 234, Private Collections, State Archives, Raleigh, N.C. (hereafter McKimmon Papers).

³⁸ Press report, May 1917, Folder 5, G.P. 369; Jane S. McKimmon, "Report of Girls' Canning Clubs, North Carolina, 1911-1912," p. 1, Box 234.1, McKimmon Papers; Jane S. McKimmon, "Fifth Annual Report of Home Demonstration Work, 1917-1918," in the "Second Annual Report of the N.C. Agricultural Extension

state to conserve food reduced the need for imports, relieved pressure to produce more foodstuffs, and allowed the national government to provide food more efficiently to American soldiers and partner nations overseas.

Beyond conservation, “success [in food management] would depend as much upon the farmer as upon reduction of consumption,” according to U.S. Food Administrator Herbert Hoover.³⁹ To increase the production of foodstuffs, the Food Conservation Commission and the North Carolina Council of Defense also worked to increase the acreage of wheat and corn in the state.⁴⁰ A shift from cash crops to foodstuff would require the replacement of cotton and tobacco acreage in the state, the cultivation of additional land for wheat and corn, and the dissemination of better methods of cultivation and heavier fertilization by farmers.⁴¹ Accomplishing these tasks required a more thorough integration of efforts in the state “along the line of greatest economy and efficiency,” wrote Council Chair Hill, a role for which the North Carolina Council of Defense was well-positioned to undertake.⁴² As the state’s intermediary institution for mobilization, the Council linked the national government with state and local agencies, as well as with private organizations from Farmer’s Unions and business associations and Chambers of Commerce to the

Service,” p. 32, Box 234.1, McKimmon Papers; Jane S. McKimmon, “Sixth Annual Report of Home Demonstration Work, 1917-1918,” in the “Third Annual Report of the N.C. Agricultural Extension Service,” p. 51, Box 234.1, McKimmon Papers.

³⁹ Hoover, *Memoirs*, 242.

⁴⁰ James H. Pou, “Some Suggestions to the Emergency Food Growers,” *Raleigh News & Observer*, 28 May 1917, Folder 30, Box 11, WWI 2; Angela Jill Cooley, “Food Soldiers: Rural Southerners and Food Regulation during World War I,” in Matthew L. Downs and M. Ryan Floyd, eds., *The American South and the Great War, 1914-1924* (Baton Rouge, L.A.: Louisiana State University Press, 2018), 94-95.

⁴¹ Lucas to the Federal Trade Commission, 25 Apr 1917, Folder 4, Box 1, WWI 8; Lucas to Gray, 4 May 1917, Folder 8, Box 1, WWI 8.

⁴² Hill to Pate, 3 May 1918, Folder 4, Box 3, WWI 1; State Councils Section, Weekly Report No. 27, 16 Feb 1918, Folder 5, Box 6, Robinson Papers.

state Agricultural College and livestock clubs.⁴³ Working in support of the Food Conservation Commission, the state Council of Defense pulled together these varied organizations and individual state citizens, from “all of whom it has secured earnest and effective cooperation” to convert cash crops to foodstuff, according to the Commission’s executive secretary, J.P. Lucas.⁴⁴ Increased demand for wheat and corn also increased prices, playing an additional role in the rise in production.⁴⁵

The major constraint on increasing food production was a shortage of agricultural labor, which had already come into view before the war. This shortage was a product of the migration of an increasing number of families to cities in search of more steady income and a less onerous lifestyle. After the American entry into the war, the shortage was exacerbated by the fact that non-commercial farmers, which included most of the farms in North Carolina, were not exempted from the draft.⁴⁶ There were also conflicts over how the national government addressed labor. For instance, both the Departments of Agriculture and Labor competed initially to address

⁴³ Lucas to County Food Conservation Committees, 27 Apr 1917, Folder 4, G.P. 369; Hill to Houston, 13 Aug 1917, Folder 4, Box 2, WWI 1; Hill to Porter, 18 Aug 1917, Folder 4, Box 2, WWI 1; Hill to Horney, 13 Aug 1917, Box 10, Folder 10, WWI 1; State Councils Section, Weekly Report No. 16, 3 Dec 1917, Folder 5, Box 6, Robinson Papers; State Councils Section, Weekly Report No. 17, 10 Dec 1917, Folder 5, Box 6, Robinson Papers; Hill to Hibbard, 30 Jul 1918, Folder 6, Box 3, WWI 1; Bowler to Lucas, 28 Apr 1917, Folder 3, Box 1, WWI 8; Lucas to the Federal Trade Commission, 25 Apr 1917, Folder 4, Box 1, WWI 8; Lucas to Bickett, 8 Jun 1917, Folder 1, G.P. 370.

⁴⁴ Lucas to the *Raleigh News & Observer*, 14 Aug 1917, Folder 2, Box 2, WWI 8.

⁴⁵ Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2008), 101; Amy Bentley, *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity* (Urbana, I.L.: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 20-21. Not everyone was convinced to switch to food crops, with plenty of farmers hedging. An example close to the North Carolina Council of Defense was J.B. Grimes, the North Carolina Secretary of State and member of the state Council executive committee, whose farm spanned Pitt and Washington counties and still focused the majority of its acreage on cotton and tobacco. Grimes to Evans and Warren, 10 Jan 1918, Folder 396, Box 31, John Bryan Grimes Papers; Evan P. Bennett, “Years of Promise: Tobacco Agriculture and the Great War,” in Shepherd W. McKinley and Steven Sabol, eds., *North Carolina’s Experience During the First World War* (Knoxville, T.N.: University of Tennessee Press, 2018), 287-294.

⁴⁶ Patterson to Bickett, 1 Oct 1917, Folder 1, G.P. 371; MacLean to Bickett, 17 Jan 1918, Folder 1, G.P. 374.

agricultural labor shortages, causing confusion and inefficiency in an already tight labor market.⁴⁷ Finally, the convergence of racism, poor treatment of Black tenant farmers, and the increase of industrial jobs in the cities (particularly in the North) led to the migration of large numbers of Black North Carolinians away from farms – and the state altogether.⁴⁸ The loss of Black agricultural workers not only diminished the state’s capacity to increase the production of food crops, it also created a social and political panic among white North Carolinians as the latter saw their carefully constructed post-Civil War regime of labor, centered on Black tenant farmers, begin to fray. This panic led to repeated calls for national government intervention to keep Black citizens from migrating to the North. Few commented on the hypocrisy of abrogating their usual position of state’s rights, according to historian Angela Cooley, so long as “it furthered their own racial and economic interests.”⁴⁹

The North Carolina Council of Defense and Farm Conservation Committee attempted different approaches to overcome shortages of farm labor, including increased mechanization and the enlisting of urban citizens for farm work. Hill and the Council of Defense approached tractor manufacturers and purveyors of other mechanical implements to acquire the means to supplement the lack of manpower.⁵⁰ Given the shortage of funds for the Council and the capital-intensive investment for cash-strapped farmers, there was little impact of mechanization on the farms in North Carolina during the war. Also largely ineffective, according to Governor Bickett, were efforts to convince men and women “in the towns and cities to utilize their idle hours and idle men in making food for themselves.”⁵¹ More organized efforts to get secondary and college

⁴⁷ Lucas to Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, 1 Jun 1917, Folder 12, WWI 8; Lucas to North Carolina Commercial Organizations, 4 Jun 1917, Folder 12, WWI 8; MacLean to Bickett, 17 Jan 1918, Folder 1, G.P. 374.

⁴⁸ MacLean to Bickett, 17 Jan 1918, Folder 1, G.P. 374; Bickett to MacLean, 22 Jan 1918, Folder 1, G.P. 374.

⁴⁹ Cooley, “Food Soldiers,” 97.

⁵⁰ Hill to Ford, 24 May 1918, Folder 4, Box 3, WWI 1.

⁵¹ Bickett, “Beginning and Ending at Jerusalem,” appeal to the public, 13 May 1917, Folder 2, G.P. 373.1.

students to spend their summers and breaks on farms, discussed in more depth later, were more successful at organizing an alternative labor pool, though it had minimal impact on food production overall.

The element of food policy in North Carolina that most effectively increased the state's capability to produce greater output was the employment and integration of so-called 'county agents.' These were individuals focused on the local level to promote the planting of wheat and corn, using improved farming techniques. County agents were, in the analysis of David Kennedy, "agricultural officers of the Chamber of Commerce" who were supported by local private farm bureaus, as well as federal, state, and local governments, leading to what in essence were public officers working for a private organization to shape public policy.⁵² Both publicly and privately supported, county agents were instrumental in leading efforts at demonstration and education on seed selection, cultivation, and fertilization, as well as tying farmers into the resources of the State College of Agriculture and Engineering and state Department of Agriculture. County agents also found themselves frequently helping the state Council to mobilize rural citizens in support of the war generally by conducting propaganda campaigns, organizing drives to raise money for the Red Cross and Y.M.C.A., coercing recalcitrant community members to buy Liberty Bonds, and even issuing "Work or Fight" orders.⁵³ By 1918, there were sixty-six white and four Black county agents in North Carolina, playing their part in the improving crop yields by two to three times of what they had been in 1917, according to the *Manufacturers' Record*, a national financial newspaper.⁵⁴

⁵² Kennedy, *Over Here*, 121-122.

⁵³ Danbom, "The Agricultural Extension System and the First World War," 320-321.

⁵⁴ F.H. Jeter, "How North Carolina Met the Demand for More Food and Feedstuff," *Manufacturers' Record*, 14 Mar 1918, Folder 11, Box 10, WWI 1; Pratt, "History of the North Carolina Council of Defense," 294-295. The five districts of the state are: mountain, the Piedmont, central, coastal plain, and tidewater.

The integration of existing mechanisms for food conservation and production by the Food Conservation Commission and Council of Defense was crucial to setting the foundation for food management in the state for the remainder of the war. Additionally, the individuals chosen to manage this element of resource management would continue to shape food policy choices in the state as the federal government began to encroach on the state's efforts.

Co-opting the National Fight for Food

National efforts at managing the food crisis in the United States began as early as May 1917, with President Wilson requesting Herbert Hoover return from his work as the head of the Commission for Relief in Belgium. Hoover wasted no time organizing for the work, establishing his headquarters in Washington, D.C. within days of his return.⁵⁵ Recognizing the importance of this appointment, Governor Bickett offered the support of North Carolina's food conservation efforts to Hoover.⁵⁶ According to historian Seward Livermore, the passing of legislation to formally establish a national Food Administration was delayed, however, due to concerns among some senators that the national government would be "interfering with the food rights of the people," as well as giving too much power to one man.⁵⁷ Until the legislation was passed in September, the void in food policy was filled through the work of the North Carolina Council of Defense and the state Food Conservation Commission.⁵⁸

Even when food policy transitioned to the national Food Administration in September, it remained highly dependent on the state Council of Defense and state-level efforts. Hoover's management style and political philosophy matched the American associational state well. His

⁵⁵ Hoover, *Memoirs*, 240.

⁵⁶ Bickett to Hoover, 25 May 1917, Folder 9, WWI 8; Hoover to Bickett, 29 May 1917, Folder 5, G.P. 369.

⁵⁷ Seward W. Livermore, *Politics Is Adjourned: Woodrow Wilson and the War Congress, 1916-1918* (Middletown, C.T.: Wesleyan University Press, 1966), 51-53; Hoover, *Memoirs*, 241-248.

⁵⁸ Lucas to County Food Conservation Commissions, 1 Sep 1917, Folder 2, Box 2, WWI 8.

conception allowed for policy to be centralized under him in Washington, assessed historian of the Food Administration William Mullendore, while execution and adjustment would be decentralized to the states and rely upon “assembl[ing] the voluntary effort of the people” and “link[ing] war agencies to private organizations.”⁵⁹ Such an associational approach, focused on generating public voluntary support, fit well with President Wilson’s need to sell the war as an emergency and present measures to mobilize the nation to prosecute it as temporary.⁶⁰

This decentralized approach required the Food Administration to rely upon “the food production and conservation machinery already established by the state councils,” wrote historian William Breen, and depended upon state leadership to nominate representatives who would enact Hoover’s policies below the national level.⁶¹ In North Carolina, the machinery used by the national Food Administration was the integrated organizations of the state Council of Defense and the Food Conservation Commission, the latter of which wholly transitioned to a state Food Administration subordinate to Hoover. This state body included B.W. Kilgore and state Council of Defense Chair Hill as members of the Executive Committee, while J.P. Lucas transitioned to serve as the executive secretary.⁶² To manage the transition and lead the new organization, Governor Bickett, at the recommendation of Hill, named Henry A. Page.⁶³ The appointment of a state food administrator was not contested in Washington, allowing the Council of Defense to ensure the federal response in their state would be dependent on their management of all food

⁵⁹ Mullendore, *History of the United States Food Administration*, 52-53; Hawley, *The Great War and the Search for Modern Order*, 19.

⁶⁰ Cuff, “Herbert Hoover,” 361-362.

⁶¹ Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 29; Frederick Lewis Allen, “The Council of Defense System: A History Submitted to the Director of the Council of National Defense,” unpublished, pp. 17, 42, 17-B.1, Box 1053, RG 62, NARA; Mullendore, *History of the United States Food Administration*, 8; Dickson, *The Food Front in World War I*, 16; Cuff, “Herbert Hoover,” 367; Neil O. Buschman, “The United States Food Administration During World War I: The Rise of Activist Government Through Food Control During Mobilization for Total War,” master’s thesis (Auburn, A.L., Auburn University, 2013).

⁶² “Staff of the North Carolina Food Administration,” undated, Folder 4, Box 2, WWI 8.

⁶³ Gifford to Wilson, 16 Aug 1917, Folder 4, Box 2, WWI 1; Wilson to Porter, 27 Aug 1917, Folder 4, Box 2, WWI 1; Pratt, “History of the North Carolina Council of Defense,” 282-285.

conservation and production efforts during the war.⁶⁴ Additionally, the federal government depended heavily upon personnel on the ground, seen most clearly in the fact that fifty-six of the one-hundred chairs of the County Councils of Defense in North Carolina also held the role of county food administrator. This dual hatting of Council personnel indicates both the importance of food management and the centrality of the Council of Defense System to that aspect of the mobilization.⁶⁵

Throughout the war, there was close and constant cooperation between Page and the North Carolina Council of Defense, provided largely through Hill at the executive committee level and Kilgore on the Council's Conservation and Economy Committee.⁶⁶ Kilgore's position within the state Department of Agriculture, his ties to the College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, and his working relationships with private associations, farmers unions, and agricultural clubs enabled him to emerge as a key coordinator for food conservation and production in the state, expanding the capacity of the state Council of Defense in its efforts in support of the nascent Food Administration.⁶⁷

As the war crept into 1918, the Food Administration's reliance upon voluntary cooperation by the men and women of North Carolina reached its culmination point. Initial voluntary compliance did not achieve the desired reduction in consumption, and prices for many

⁶⁴ Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 28. On the politics of state appointees for federal positions, see Livermore, *Politics Is Adjourned*, 40-47. North Carolina, as a Democratically run state with a pro-Wilson governor, rarely had issues with federal agencies and organizations failing to appoint Governor Bickett's nominees.

⁶⁵ These insights come from a database of more than two thousand individuals who participated in North Carolina's war effort, compiled by James S. Bissett and refined by the author based upon the state's World War I papers in the State Archive. The author owes a great debt of thanks to Professor Bissett for sharing his work. This fact is also mentioned in "Patriotic Work in New Hanover," *Commercial Bulletin: Publication of the Chamber of Commerce, Wilmington* 1, no. 12 (Nov 1917): 4; and Pratt, "History of the North Carolina Council of Defense," 286-289.

⁶⁶ Hill to Porter, 31 Aug 1917, Folder 4, Box 2, WWI 1; Hill to Page, 8 Sep 1917, Folder 5, Box 2, WWI 1; Hill to County Chairmen, 14 Sep 1917, Folder 10, Box 10, WWI 1; Porter to Wilson, 22 Aug 1917, Folder 4, Box 2, WWI 1; True to State Extension Directors, 23 Feb 1918, Folder 3, Box 7, WWI 1.

⁶⁷ Francis to Hill, 26 Oct 1918, Randall to Hill, 31 Oct 1918; and Hill to Patterson, 13 Dec 1918, Folder 13, Box 14, WWI 1.

products continued to rise. Additionally, the populace at large began to experience increasing fatigue and economic hardship brought on by the requested conservation measures, leading some to simply stop supporting the Food Administration's efforts. To continue pressure to increase the supply of foodstuff by constraining demand, as well as preventing price gouging by merchants and distributors, the Food Administration began instituting a licensing system. Run by the Food Administration at the state level, the system determined who could acquire, sell, and distribute goods, thereby allowing Page and his organization to manage supply by taking control of the market.⁶⁸ This coercive measure was provided in the original Lever Food and Fuel Act, which created the Food Administration. It allowed Food Administrators to, in the words of Hoover himself, "prevent speculation and hoarding; to fix trade margins; to eliminate waste in manufacture and distribution; to organize the trades; and to buy and sell food" through the licensing of businesses.⁶⁹

The licensing system allowed Page to target distributors in his efforts to reduce consumption, while simultaneously convincing individuals to conserve more food. This approach was especially used to monitor and manage price speculation and gouging by distributors. According to Page, "By means [sic] of its control...through the license system...the prices...and the products there of have been steadied and stabilized [sic] and the industries have been rid of

⁶⁸ Hoover, *Memoirs*, 243; Albert N. Merritt, *War Time Control of Distribution of Foods: A Short History of the Distribution Division of the United States Food Administration, Its Personnel and Achievements* (New York, N.Y.: Macmillan Company, 1920), 15-22; Eisner, *From Warfare State to Welfare State*, 185-191; Richard Joseph Beamish and Francis Andrew March, *America's Part in the World War: A History of the Full Greatness of Our Country's Achievements* (Philadelphia, P.A.: John C. Winston Company, 1919), 320; Paul Willard Garrett, *Government Control Over Prices* (Washington, D.C.: War Trade Board, Government Printing Office, 1920), 42-45, 57-59.

⁶⁹ Hoover, *Memoirs*, 249. The specifics of the Lever Act can be found at United States Congress, Lever Food and Fuel Control Act, 10 Aug 1917, Public Law 65-41, 40 Stat. 276, 65th Congress, 1st Session, https://congressional-proquest-com.proxy.lib.duke.edu/congressional/docview/t41.d42.65_pl_41?accountid=10598, accessed 26 Jan 2022.

the ill effects of speculation and other injurious practices.”⁷⁰ While Page was not above the use of coercive measures, even if deemed unconstitutional later, his focus and that of those working on food policy in North Carolina was to appeal to patriotic sentiment, not to threaten with penalties. According to Page, penalties were not effective tools, stating: “If we have not the ingenuity and imagination to secure results without wholesale prosecution, we deserve to fail.”⁷¹ Instead, Page, with support from the members of the North Carolina Council of Defense, worked through various organized interest groups to achieve compliance. Such interest groups included local Chambers of Commerce, private farming associations, county agents, and county Councils of Defense, which were led by many members of their Chambers of Commerce or other private groups focused on local farming.⁷²

By the end of the war in November 1918, the state Food Administration under Page, heavily supported by the North Carolina Council of Defense, had a demonstrable effect on food conservation and production in the state. From April 1917 to November 1918, North Carolina’s conservation efforts dramatically expanded. Prior to America’s entry into the war, about 681,000 containers of food (canned or jarred) were preserved. After the state increased its efforts through the Food Conservation Commission and the Food Administration, almost 9 million containers were preserved. In the last year of the war, about 5.9 million containers were conserved. Such a dramatic increase in preserved food not only employed many women and African Americans during the war, but also reduced the need for increased importation of food and provided North Carolinians more stable access to fruits and vegetables during the war.⁷³ The overall consumption

⁷⁰ John Paul Lucas, “The License System,” 9 Feb 1918, p. 1, in “Summary of Conference Conclusions,” Folder 8, Box 9, WWI 8.

⁷¹ Hallauree to Federal Food Administrators, “Enforcement of the Food Act against Unlicensed Retailers,” 21 Jan 1918, Folder 22, Box 12, WWI 8; Hoover, *Memoirs*, 249; Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 97-100; Cuff, “Herbert Hoover,” 364, 371.

⁷² John Paul Lucas, “The License System,” 2.

⁷³ Jane S. McKimmon, “Fourth Annual Report of Home Demonstration Work, 1918,” p. 63, Folder 7, P.C. 234.1, McKimmon Papers.

of food external to the state dropped, with virtually no corn being imported in 1917 and 1918, down from the importation of twenty-five million bushels of corn imported in 1916.⁷⁴ When it came to food production, the state quadrupled its yield between 1917 and 1918, driven by work by Page, Kilgore, Lucas, and the members of the state and county Councils of Defense. Additionally, an increase in the prices for these crops, driven by wartime demand for food, also contributed.⁷⁵

Finally, national efforts toward the execution of food policy could not have been successful without the work of the men and women organized under the state and county Councils of Defense. The situation was too fluid and flexible to be centralized in Washington, a fact leveraged by Hoover. Control was instead decentralized and placed into the hands of the men and women chosen by the state Council of Defense and executed by North Carolinian citizens in numerous and informal ways, shifting from day to day as the situation required.⁷⁶

“The Labor Problem” and North Carolina

Like food, labor was an issue with which both national and state leaders struggled even before the United States entered the First World War. The Council of National Defense began addressing “the labor problem” immediately, by making the president of the American Federation

⁷⁴ S. R. Winters, “Food Conservation in North Carolina,” *Review of Reviews* (New York) 56 (November 1917): 504-506, reprinted in the *Raleigh News and Observer*, 15 November 1917; William J. Breen, “Southern Women in the War: The North Carolina Woman’s Committee, 1917-1919,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 55, no. 3 (1978): 264fn54.

⁷⁵ Breen, “Southern Women in the War,” 264; Laura Holmes Reilley, “Final Report, Woman’s Committee Council of National Defense North Carolina Division,” unpublished, p. 11, Folder 8, Box 17, WWI 1; Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 101; Bentley, *Eating for Victory*, 20-21. This fed into the national trend of a decrease in cotton and tobacco production and increase in wheat and corn harvests from 1914 to 1919, Susan B. Carter, *Historical Statistics of the United States* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Tables Da1095, 1096, 1103, and 1104, <https://hsus.cambridge.org/HSUSWeb/>, accessed 25 Jan 2022.

⁷⁶ Garrett, *Government Control Over Prices*, 40.

of Labor, Samuel Gompers, the chair of its committee on labor.⁷⁷ Through Gompers and prominent professional men on the Advisory Commission, the national Council courted and developed relationships with key interest groups in labor, business, and other governmental agencies to shore up support.⁷⁸ As the United States entered the war, national leaders of mobilization such as Howard Coffin of the Advisory Commission declared that, “the sweat of the worker must be mixed three parts for one with the blood of the soldier.”⁷⁹

The national governmental agencies the Council of National Defense coordinated with most were the nascent Department of Labor, which focused on skilled and industrial labor, and the Department of Agriculture, which tried to maintain control over agricultural labor policy. The need for workers by both agencies, in addition to the vast amounts of manpower needed by the War Department for its expanding army, led to consistent friction and in-fighting at the federal level. As each developed its own way of managing labor, it fell to the states to mediate and integrate approaches to labor management in their territories.⁸⁰

When it came to the management of labor, North Carolina skewed heavily toward business over workers, in line with the long-standing direction of Democratic politics in the state.⁸¹ Many of the party faithful were businessmen, as well as leaders of Chambers of

⁷⁷ Bruce I. Bustard, “The Human Factor: Labor Administration and Industrial Manpower Mobilization During the First World War,” PhD diss. (Ames, I.A., University of Iowa, 1984), 29, 50; David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 355-356, 368. “The labor problem” stemmed from many sources but included the long-running hostile relationship in America between business and labor which was only exacerbated by inflation and employment challenges from 1914-1916 until wartime jobs exploded as the United States stepped up its preparedness. See Bustard, “The Human Factor,” 45; Robert D. Cuff, “The Politics of Labor Administration During World War I,” *Labor History* 21, no. 4 (1980): 549-550.

⁷⁸ Bustard, “The Human Factor,” 50.

⁷⁹ Howard Coffin, press release, Spring 1917, 21A-A4, Box 1520, Records of the War Industries Board, RG 61, NARA.

⁸⁰ Hill to Porter, 9 Jan 1918, Folder 9, Box 2, WWI 1; William J. Breen, *Labor Market Politics and the Great War: The Department of Labor, the States, and the First U.S. Employment Service, 1907-1933* (Kent, O.H.: Kent State University Press, 1997), 8, 37.

⁸¹ Paul Luebke, *Tar Heel Politics: Myths and Realities* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 8.

Commerce and Merchants Associations. Membership in these elements of organized society was equally true of the men tapped to manage mobilization efforts in the state, particularly the state and county Councils of Defense. Additionally, the dominance of white supremacy in the structures and politics of the state led to an atmosphere that was anti-union, with political and business elites focusing on the ability of landowners, businessmen, and manufacturers to control the movement and use of workers, particularly Black workers, a dynamic that would play a large part in “Work or Fight” discussions in the state toward the end of the war.

A focus on business over labor meant any ‘progress’ in relation to economic affairs in North Carolina “tended to enhance the interests of the business community primarily and to reinforce the existing social, political and economic order,” according to political scientist Paul Luebke.⁸² While Governor Bickett was less anti-union than his predecessors, it was only insofar as he did not defer automatically to business and weigh in on their behalf over labor.⁸³ Bickett’s approach changed as America entered the war. The need for direct control over the movement of labor became acute with the shortage of workers, and the federal government attempted to manage the situation. Ensuring the state maintained control over its manpower, and requiring professional support for any effective planning efforts, Bickett and the state Council strategically chose businessmen and technical experts who could be counted upon to be loyal to state interests as leaders of resource management efforts. As the state evolved its management of the mobilization for war, employers won out over workers, with labor failing to “win a regular seat at the table,” according to Luebke.⁸⁴

In the winter of 1917-18, attempting to strengthen labor management across the country, President Wilson named the Secretary of Labor, William B. Wilson, as the “War Labor

⁸² Ibid., 8.

⁸³ Ibid., 13-14.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 85.

Administrator.”⁸⁵ Secretary Wilson then created various organizations to address policy, registration, and employment, including the National War Labor Board, U.S. Employment Service, Public Service Reserve, and Boys’ Working Reserve.⁸⁶ Despite their robustness, these bureaucratic efforts by the national government to centralize the management of labor remained nonetheless hampered by the federalist nature of the American associational state.⁸⁷ The knowledge and expertise for connecting business to workers, and workers to jobs, existed primarily in the states, with labor exchanges entirely privatized.⁸⁸ Decentralized and private sector-led labor management efforts created an initial willingness by wartime national agencies to cooperate with the states, leveraging organizations such as the North Carolina Council of Defense which could mediate central policy desires with state and local execution, particularly when action on the ground would require support from organized society.⁸⁹

One of the first tasks the North Carolina Council of Defense was asked to address was the formation of labor exchanges and the creation of state structures to support the nascent U.S. Employment Service to identify jobs, register workers, and shift labor where required for wartime needs.⁹⁰ Prior to the war, the few employment bureaus that existed in North Carolina were managed by private organizations like Chambers of Commerce and “operated in a fairly limited local market,” according to William Breen.⁹¹ Mostly for that reason, but also because of the

⁸⁵ U.S. Department of Labor, “Chapter 1: Start-up of the Department and World War I, 1913-1921,” *History of the Department of Labor*, <https://www.dol.gov/general/aboutdol/history/dolchp01>, accessed 30 Aug 2021.

⁸⁶ Cuff, “The Politics of Labor Administration, 560; Bustard, “The Human Factor,” 30; Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor*, 374-375; Conner, *The National War Labor Board*, 32-33; Adam J. Hodges, *World War I and Urban Order: The Local Class Politics of National Mobilization* (New York, N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 44; Breen, *Labor Market Politics and the Great War*, 37-40; McCartin, *Labor’s Great War*, 73-80, 84-93.

⁸⁷ Breen, *Labor Market Politics and the Great War*, xv.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 17, 24-25.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁹⁰ Wilson to Pratt, 7 May 1917, Folder 7, Box 19, WWI 1.

⁹¹ Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 26.

vested interests of the federal executive departments and the Council of National Defense, initial efforts to grasp the ‘labor problem’ in the state were chaotic.⁹²

To address the confusion and conflicting interests, as well as the need for manpower to establish labor management structures in the state, the national governmental agencies turned to the North Carolina Council of Defense. With little extant capability, the Council struggled to understand the labor situation in the state, particularly outside of the major cities. The Council’s first step was to establish two committees.⁹³ First, it created a Committee on Industrial Survey that would determine what businesses existed to support wartime requirements, particularly in munitions and shipbuilding, as well as potential areas for growth. To match this business-focused approach, the Council then established a Committee on Labor, led by Benjamin R. Lacy, a former railroad worker and Commissioner of Labor and Printing, but currently serving as the state Treasurer. Known as “Honest Ben Lacy” for his competent mediation between business and labor, it was initially his job as the chair of the committee to determine how to “promote the establishment of labor exchanges in smaller towns and cities,” wrote the Assistant United States Secretary of Labor Louis Post, as well as integrate them into both state and national efforts at labor management for the war.⁹⁴ Through its committees and placement of Lacy as the lead labor administrator, the state Council of Defense was poised to take the lead to integrate efforts by national and state governments, and public and private actors, to expand North Carolina’s capability for labor management.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 26.

⁹³ North Carolina Council of Defense, *Plan of Organization*, 13-14.

⁹⁴ Louis Post to Woodrow Wilson, 27 Nov 1917, included in, “Special Report of the Assistant Secretary to The Secretary of Labor,” 31 Dec 1917, File 197-C-1, William B. Wilson Papers; State Councils Section, Minutes of Regular Staff Meeting, 6 Dec 1917, Folder 2, Box 6, Robinson Papers; Breen, *Labor Market Politics and the Great War*, 35. For more on Benjamin Lacy, see Holt McPherson, “Benjamin Rice Lacy,” in William S. Powell, ed., *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Hale to Wilson, 27 Jul 1917, Folder 1, Box 12, WWI 1.

Wrestling with Industrial Labor

True leadership by the Council failed to appear until the spring of 1918, however. Hill and other Council members believed there were too few requirements for skilled labor in the state to make the effort. By 1918, however, a significant shortage of skilled labor developed due to increased need for shipbuilding. The shortage of skilled labor led leaders in the Council of National Defense, the U.S. Department of Labor, and the state Council of Defense to call for more dedicated measures at labor management. This included the extension of the “state employment exchange system,” wrote national Council member George Porter, “so that an actual clearinghouse will be established” to better connect workers to available jobs.⁹⁵ This clearinghouse was achieved through the formal creation of a state Public Service Reserve, which could collect the information of skilled workers and share that information with employers looking for labor. Hill chose T.L. Bland, a businessman running a chain of hotels throughout the state, to head the Reserve, which had ties to the U.S. Labor Department’s U.S. Employment System, while taking direction from the state Council of Defense.⁹⁶

Unlike most individuals nominated by the North Carolina Council of Defense to national agencies, Bland was not initially appointed by the U.S. Department of Labor.⁹⁷ Bureaucrats in Washington charged that Bland was not supportive enough of workers, though it may also have been because he was Republican.⁹⁸ Hill and Bickett quickly pushed back, advocating for Bland

⁹⁵ Porter to Hill, 8 Dec 1917, Folder 8, Box 2 WWI 1.

⁹⁶ W.S. Wilson to Secretary of Labor Wilson, 7 Feb 1918, Folder 10, Box 2, WWI 1; Wilson to Porter, 7 Feb 1917, Folder 10, Box 2, WWI 1; State Councils Section, Minutes of Regular Staff Meeting, 6 Feb 1918, Folder 2, Box 6, Robinson Papers; U.S. Public Service Reserve, “What It Is, Why You Should Join It,” pamphlet, 1918, Folder 8, Box 14, WWI 1; Breen, *Labor Market Politics and the Great War*, 39, 46. The Department of Labor established a state-based system for the U.S.E.S. to court members of Congress to fund it, as well as leverage extant labor exchanges in the states. See Cuff, “The Politics of Labor Administration,” 555.

⁹⁷ Robinson to Wilson, 9 Feb 1918, Folder 10, Box 2, WWI 1.

⁹⁸ William J. Breen, “The North Carolina Council of Defense during World War I, 1917-1918,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 50, no. 1 (1973): 21, 24.

by arguing that it was their right to pick the men most suited for mobilization work in the state.⁹⁹ The fight over Bland's nomination stretched over months in which he still worked to establish state exchanges. The protracted fight displays the willingness of the state Council of Defense to mediate national governmental concerns based on their own perceived requirements. Bland was chosen to address state leadership's needs for a state-recognized individual, a member of the political opposition, and to cater to the strength of business interests in the state over labor. As far as Hill and Bickett were concerned, the Labor Department's agenda was not as important as the political and mobilization needs of the state.

Eventually overcoming the intransigence of the Labor Department, Hill appointed Bland as the state director of the Reserve. Bland would simultaneously hold the title of Chair of the Employment Exchange for Labor Committee on the North Carolina Council of Defense, placing him in a position, much like Kilgore for food management, as the integrator of national, state, and local labor issues in the state.¹⁰⁰ Through these two positions, Bland became the head of both distributing and recruiting labor in the state; the former through the exchanges, the latter through the efforts of the Public Service Reserve.¹⁰¹ Placing labor in the hands of one person in the state, according to William Breen, meant Bland acted "in the dual capacity of director of the state system and federal Director for that state."¹⁰² This distribution established a relationship whereby the national government focused on general policy, while the federal director in the state

⁹⁹ Hill to Robinson, 11 Feb 1918, Folder 10, Box 2, WWI 1. Other states also had issues getting their nominees through the Department of Labor, though not all were as successful as North Carolina in forcing through their preferred individual. Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 27.

¹⁰⁰ Hill to Robinson, 8 Jan 1918, Folder 9, Box 2, WWI 1; Hill to Porter, 9 Jan 1918, Folder 9, Box 2, WWI 1; North Carolina Council of Defense, *First Annual Report*, 11.

¹⁰¹ Metcalf to Iowa U.S.P.S.R. agents, 16 Jul 1918, Folder 6, Box 3, WWI 1. Both positions were subordinate to the Department of Labor's U.S. Employment Service, which was attempting to develop consistent national policies for the management of labor. Breen, *Labor Market Politics and the Great War*, 40.

¹⁰² Breen, *Labor Market Politics and the Great War*, 33.

remained in charge of activities in the state.¹⁰³ There was benefit to both the national government and the state in this arrangement, as costs were shared, thereby reducing the burden on each to manage the system. More importantly for Hill and the state Council of Defense, this arrangement gave the state the autonomy to manage its own affairs, as long as its officials applied the broad policies coming out of Washington.¹⁰⁴

The ability of state leaders to manage their own labor was the main reason why the Council leadership fought to maintain Bland in the position. It gave the Council's leaders the power to address the continually evolving labor situation in the state according to their own preferences. According to Bland, centralization at the state level promised to lead to better coordination, quicker results in placing workers, and better job placement, as local registrars under Bland could ascertain and verify skills and qualifications for open positions.¹⁰⁵ The increase in Bland's capability to match workers to jobs also increased the capability of the national mobilization, just as significant amounts of skilled workers were required for shipbuilding.

In the first months of 1918, the U.S. Shipping Board was struggling to quickly manufacture transport ships needed to transport men and materiel to France. As Bland built up exchanges in the state to identify the location of shipbuilding jobs, as well as recruit workers for the U.S. Public Service Reserve, he coordinated through the North Carolina Council of Defense to "build a sentiment that will build ships," wrote national Council member George Porter.¹⁰⁶ The U.S. Department of Labor leved a quota of 9,264 men in North Carolina to join the Public

¹⁰³ Ibid., 76.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 77.

¹⁰⁵ Bland to County Chairmen, 7 Feb 1918, Folder 8, Box 14, WWI 1.

¹⁰⁶ Porter to Hill, 28 Jan 1918, Folder 9, Box 2, WWI 1; Porter to Wilson, 4 Feb 1918, Folder 10, Box 2, WWI 1.

Service Reserve for use in shipbuilding in the port cities of Morehead and Wilmington.¹⁰⁷ In response, the Council of Defense supported Bland to recruit and place men in those jobs. This effort was so successful that within a month North Carolina had met its quota, causing the personal secretary of the Governor to write to county Council of Defense officials that “immediate labor needs at these [ship]yards have been met” and to inform the citizens of their counties to not leave their current jobs in search of shipyard work.¹⁰⁸ North Carolina’s capability to generate skilled labor was greater than the need for it.

In the summer of 1918, just as American troops were entering combat in earnest and the need for transportation to send even more troops to France surged, there developed a shortage of unskilled labor in the state. Demand for workers in munitions and other wartime factories pushed the national government to request the registration of 250,000 workers for service.¹⁰⁹ The cooperation of the state Council, and Bland as the central hub of worker registration and work distribution, was crucial to registering and placing men into these jobs critical to the war.¹¹⁰ Leadership in Washington, captured by national Council member D.M. Reynolds, felt this demand for unskilled labor “must be met no matter what” and pushed the state Council to focus on moving men from non-essential work to war industries.¹¹¹ In response, both the national government and the state leadership put into effect a system that paralleled the conscription of men for military service, though without the legislative compulsory mandate of the Selective

¹⁰⁷ Wilson to Bickett, 11 Jan 1918, Folder 9, Box 2, WWI 1; Porter to Hill, 22 Jan 1918, Folder 9, Box 2, WWI 1; Jessica Bandel, “Building Ships for the Government,” *North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources*, 21 Sep 2017, <https://www.ncdcr.gov/blog/2017/09/21/building-ships-government>, accessed 31 Aug 2021.

¹⁰⁸ Sanford to Chairman, 14 Feb 1918, in Pratt, “History of the North Carolina Council of Defense,” 238-239.

¹⁰⁹ Breen, *Labor Market Politics and the Great War*, 52-53.

¹¹⁰ Allen, “The Council of Defense System,” 135-136.

¹¹¹ Reynolds to North Carolina Council of Defense, 18 Aug 1918, Folder 7, Box 3, WWI 1; Reynolds to North Carolina Council of Defense, 26 Aug 1918, Folder 7, Box 3, WWI 1.

Service Act. One Labor Department official referenced this system as “probably the most drastic action that the Government has taken since putting the National Army draft into effect.”¹¹²

The new labor system was designed to better link business and labor by setting up recruiting districts, using them to enroll unskilled labor, and then matching workers to jobs. The intent was to keep men within their home districts, particularly married men. Labor administrators were not averse to the movement of unmarried and critical workers when necessary.¹¹³ While the customary recruiting of labor by private organizations was not forbidden in this new system, they were required to work through Bland to ensure the coordination of the state’s manpower.¹¹⁴ Supporting these efforts, a state advisory board and local community labor boards were established to manage the inherently difficult relations between business and labor. Once again, these structures would need to be formed with state manpower, requiring the support of the state Council. These boards brought together labor and business representatives to manage all personnel in the U.S. Employment Service in North Carolina, apportion state quotas for workers throughout the state’s counties, designate areas for recruiting, and determine where and how non-essential industries could be retooled or transferred to war industries.¹¹⁵ These boards, led by men designated by the state Council of Defense, determined which jobs did or did not serve the state’s wartime interests, as well as who would fill those positions.

The new labor system’s hierarchical structure, like the structure of the Councils of Defense and other mobilization mechanisms, ensured that the national government increased its infrastructural power through the decentralized execution and management of labor, while state and local leaders could diminish as much as possible the disruption in their local economies and

¹¹² Densmore to Fleming, 10 July 1918, appended to Gifford to State Councils of Defense, Bulletin No. 101, “Labor Mobilization,” Folder 7, Box 29, WWI 1.

¹¹³ “Special Order E.1, Insert actions to State Directors of the U.S. Employment Service and of the U.S. Public Service Reserve,” July 1918, p. 2, Folder 15, Box 11, WWI 1; Densmore to Ramsey, 23 Jul 1918, Folder 1, Box 12, WWI 1.

¹¹⁴ Reynolds to North Carolina Council of Defense, 28 Jul 1918, Folder 6, Box 3, WWI 1.

¹¹⁵ Breen, *Labor Market Politics and the Great War*, 81-82, 93-94.

control the movement of local labor. This system was deliberately chosen by the national government to reduce local pushback against their new labor policies, as well as leverage the more robust and organized efforts of the states, in no small part due to the organizing of the state and county Councils of Defense.¹¹⁶ By the end of 1918, the U.S. Employment Service had registered more than six million workers, five million of whom were placed in the approximately ten million job openings it managed.¹¹⁷ The majority of the service's work was done at the local level, with community labor boards diligently working to shift work toward essential war industries and matching workers to the jobs they created.¹¹⁸

The continued shortage of men to work in necessary wartime jobs also opened new employment opportunities for women. Already slowly increasing their ability to enter the workforce just prior to the war, by 1918 many women filled "non-essential" jobs to free up men for service in uniform or in wartime industries.¹¹⁹ The dire need for men in essential industries even led national and state labor managers to dictate that, in the words of Reynolds, "Community Labor Boards will insist that no man shall occupy a position which a woman can fill."¹²⁰

Opportunities for women in industrial jobs included the integration of Black women into war

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 36; Bustard, "The Human Factor," 54; Darrell Hevenor Smith, *The United States Employment Service: Its History, Activities, and Organization* (Baltimore, M.D.: Johns Hopkins Press, 1923), 20-23.

¹¹⁷ Department of Labor, *Seventh Annual Report of the Secretary of Labor* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1919), 275, 292.

¹¹⁸ Reynolds to the North Carolina Council of Defense, 18 Jul 1918, Folder 6, Box 3, WWI 1; U.S. Department of Labor, "Special Order E.1, Insert Actions to State Directors of the U.S. Employment Service and of the U.S. Public Service Reserve," July 1918, p. 3, Folder 15, Box 11, WWI 1; Densmore to Ramsey, 23 Jul 1918, Folder 1, Box 12, WWI 1.

¹¹⁹ Reynolds to the North Carolina Council of Defense, 20 Sep 1918, Folder 8, Box 3, WWI 1; Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2003), 219. By 1910, women were 20% of the U.S. paid workforce. Kimberly Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War* (Urbana, I.L.: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 13.

¹²⁰ Reynolds to the North Carolina Council of Defense, 20 Sep 1918, Folder 8, Box 3, WWI 1; Smyth to Community Labor Boards, 19 Sep 1918, Folder 1, Box 9, WWI 1. The Council of Defense System found competition in managing women workers, particularly as the National League for Women's Service was pulled into the Labor Department and contested the management of women workers. See Barbara J. Steinson, *American Women's Activism in World War I* (New York, N.Y.: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1982), 307-308.

industry, allowing up to 22,000 women to find industrial work by 1919.¹²¹ While women made strides in gaining employment in industry nationally, relatively few women in North Carolina found employment in these sectors, outside of textiles and clerical work. The progress made by women during the war, even as small as it was, was lost after the war as the nation and North Carolina re-absorbed returning soldiers and laid off many wartime workers.

The management of industrial labor during the war was an important aspect of resource mobilization. As North Carolina's labor pools evolved due to the conscription of military-aged men and the movement of people around the country, the state Council of Defense and its appointed administrators increase the mobilizing capability of the national state by better connecting skilled and unskilled workers to wartime jobs.

Agricultural Labor

While the labor system established by Bland and the North Carolina Council of Defense made strides toward managing the industrial labor supply in the state, the most pressing need remained agricultural labor. The shortage of agricultural labor existed before the United States entered the war, having been affected by the movement of tens of millions of southerners out of the region, most of them African American farm workers. Seeking better paying jobs and less oppressive living conditions in general, this migration of men and women away from North Carolina adversely affected the size of the state's agricultural workforce and the southern white psyche, as white citizens feared they were losing the ability to control their workforce, as well as the leverage to dictate social and economic standards on Black farmers.¹²² For that reason, many of the early calls for help in agricultural work by white farm owners included commentary on

¹²¹ Charles Harris Wesley, *The History of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs: A Legacy of Service* (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc., 1984), 77-78.

¹²² Breen, *Labor Market Politics and the Great War*, 121; Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor*, 378.

Black citizens leaving the state and the purported “idleness” of those that remained.¹²³ Because of the racial foundation of state political and economic power in North Carolina, future efforts to deal with shortages in agricultural labor would be highly racialized, particularly in the context of “Work or Fight” orders and vagrancy laws.

As already mentioned, the Department of Agriculture was the primary national agency that dealt with agricultural labor prior to America’s entry into the war. Displaying the fractured nature of the national war effort, the Department of Agriculture had to fight off the Department of Labor’s intrusion into their domain.¹²⁴ By the end of April 1917, both federal agencies agreed that the Department of Agriculture held the primary authority to manage farm workers but could request support from the Department of Labor and their labor exchanges if needed.¹²⁵

This agreement did not put an end to conflict. The need to balance labor for wartime industry and the production of food was constant, with businessmen and farmers communicating to Bland and the state Council of Defense the need for more men on the farm and in industries like tanning and chemical plants that were contracted for war material.¹²⁶ The “theft of labor,” a term used by Arthur Fleming of the national Council when discussing the poaching of workers amongst various businesses, became so bad in the summer of 1918 that Bland and the state Council ruled that any business with more than one-hundred employees was required to only hire through state exchanges.¹²⁷ The use of persuasion and voluntarism failed to provide the required agricultural workers, resulting in the state Council moving to more coercive methods to manage labor.¹²⁸

¹²³ Beasley to Bickett, 19 Apr 1917, Folder 2, Box 1, WWI 8.

¹²⁴ Hill to Porter, 9 Jan 1918, Folder 9, Box 2, WWI 1; Breen, *Labor Market Politics and the Great War*, 37.

¹²⁵ Breen, *Labor Market Politics and the Great War*, 37.

¹²⁶ Cowan to Young and Hill, 19 Jun 1918, Folder 5, Box 3, WWI 1.

¹²⁷ Fleming to the North Carolina Council of Defense, 5 Jul 1918, Folder 6, Box 3, WWI 1.

¹²⁸ Hill to Chairmen of the Committees on Employment, 10 Jul 1918, Folder 10, Box 13, WWI 1; Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*.

In June of that year, Bickett hosted a statewide conference in Raleigh, supported by the state Council of Defense, to address the issue of labor, particularly agricultural labor.¹²⁹ Feeling the need to take more coercive methods to address the labor shortage, the focus for the conference was on reducing vagrancy and ensuring everyone was working to their full potential.¹³⁰ For Bickett, this was a moral issue. According to him, “he who will not work should not eat, and at this crisis we declare that no one, of whatever standing in society, has any moral right to hold himself or herself aloof from the common effort of the nation to make its war for civilization most effective.”¹³¹ Bickett did not comment on who exactly was failing to work, nor did he address which types of work were acceptable and which were not. The measures that the members of the conference developed to address labor shortages provided clarity – they wanted to get more workers on farms. The list of measures included preventing private recruiters from operating in the state, changing the draft law to conscript those not working fully in a useful job, passing local vagrancy laws, identifying slackers and matching them to jobs on local farms, forcing businesses to only hire people for full employment, and employing boys on farms.¹³² These increased coercive measures were promulgated by the state Council of Defense. Working with Page of the state’s Food Administration and Bland as the integrator of state labor, and communicating to North Carolinians through the County Councils, Hill and his state Council diligently worked to bridge public and private efforts to get as many citizens working the fields as possible – even to the point of recruiting underage men and women as farm hands when not in school.

¹²⁹ Hill to Chairmen of the Committee on Employment, 28 Jun 1918, in Pratt, “History of the North Carolina Council of Defense,” 251; “Resolutions Adopted By Labor Conference in Raleigh, June 4, 1918,” Folder 1, Box 12, WWI 1.

¹³⁰ This shift from cooperation to coercion mirrors the dynamic addressed in Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*.

¹³¹ “Resolutions Adopted By Labor Conference in Raleigh, June 4, 1918,” Folder 1, Box 12, WWI 1; Hill to County Chairmen, 12 Jun 1918, Folder 10, Box 13, WWI 1.

¹³² Ibid. Full employment was considered five days, for forty hours a week. Also, Hill to Eanes, 1 Jul 1918, Folder 1, Box 12, WWI 1; Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 106-107.

The employment of boys under the draft age of twenty-one on farms was an idea pushed early in the crisis to address the need for agricultural labor, while tapping into the general desire among many young men to serve. The use of young men on the farms also addressed the need for school and university administrators to support the war, a network in which state Council Chair Hill was tightly connected and to whom he frequently addressed the needs of mobilization.¹³³ Despite early conversations, organized efforts to use the volunteer labor of boys when not in school only gained traction under the creation of a Boys' Working Reserve by the Labor Department in the summer of 1917. The Labor Department looked to the Council of Defense to choose a state director of the Boys' Working Reserve, much as they had for the U.S. Public Reserve.¹³⁴ Hill chose J.M. Johnson, who was working on farm labor propaganda in support of the state's Agricultural Extension Program.¹³⁵ In this position, Johnson raised private donations and then coordinated with local school districts and university administrations to create a state-wide, organized effort to transport, support, and lodge young men on farms during school breaks.¹³⁶ Getting boys to work on the farm when not actively engaged in studies appealed to both Hill, previously the president of the College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts (now North Carolina State University), and Bickett. Strikingly, the latter published a proclamation on the subject in March 1918 that stated, "I trust that no boy in North Carolina will prove a slacker in

¹³³ Martin to Houston, 17 Apr 1917, Folder 4, G.P. 369. As a former president of what is now North Carolina State, state Council Chair D.H. Hill, Jr. was also a proponent of ways to employ college students when not in school; Hammel to Houston, 28 Apr 1917, Folder 4, G.P. 369; Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 1984), 105.

¹³⁴ William Hall, "Boys' Working Reserve," 26 Jul 1917, Folder 3, Box 30, WWI 1; William Hall, "Report on Boys' Working Reserve," 6 Aug 1917, Folder 3, Box 30, WWI 1; Gifford to State Councils of Defense, Information Circular No. 6, 9 Aug 1917, Folder 3, Box 30, WWI 1; Hall to Wilson, 12 Sep 1917, Folder 5, Box 2, WWI 1.

¹³⁵ Browne to Hill, 10 Sep 1917, Folder 6, Box 8, WWI 1; Hill to Hall, 19 Sep 1917, Folder 6, Box 8, WWI 1; Hall to Hill, 21 Sep 1917, Folder 5, Box 2, WWI 1; North Carolina Council of Defense, *First Annual Report*, 14.

¹³⁶ Breen, *Labor Market Politics and the Great War*, 37-38.

this emergency.”¹³⁷ The overall impact of young men on farms, like those of women recruited to work the fields discussed in the next chapter, was negligible. What North Carolina needed was full-time, dedicated agricultural labor to work current fields, plant new crops in open land, and reap the results.

The shortage of agricultural labor in North Carolina threatened not only the food supply needed for soldiers and state citizens, but it also endangered the entire political-economic system in the state. Like the management of industrial labor, the North Carolina Council of Defense and its appointed labor administrators spent significant time developing new programs to leverage every available bit of labor in the state throughout the war. Such programs were designed not only to increase resource production, but to ensure state control of manpower at a time when federal agencies, fractured by their own interagency competitions, were increasingly looking to the states to address their labor needs. In response, the Council increasingly moved toward more coercive measures to mitigate labor shortages.

“Work or Fight!” – Balancing Labor Needs through Coercion

As the labor shortage in the spring of 1918 affected both industrial and agricultural labor in the state, officials in Raleigh began recognizing that the war could last into 1919 or beyond. If the war did continue, this would mean not only an increased need for industrial and agricultural labor to supply the fight in France, but even more soldiers. Squeezing even more work out of state citizens, whether at home or abroad, would require significantly more coercion than in the opening months of the war. The only legal tool that provided that amount of coercion was the Selective Service Act, which gave federal, state, and local officials the ability to re-classify and conscript men within the military draft age if they were not gainfully employed for most of the

¹³⁷ Bickett Proclamation, 20 Mar 1918, Folder 6, Box 8, WWI 1.

week in jobs supporting the war effort. If they were found deficient, they would be remanded to the draft boards for possible conscription.¹³⁸ This “Work or Fight” measure was inserted into an update of the Selective Service Act by General Enoch Crowder in the War Department in 1918 to address national concerns about the overall labor situation and its effect on the Selective Service System.¹³⁹ According to Crowder’s office, “The war had so far disorganized normal adjustment of the industrial manpower as to prevent the enormous industrial output and national organization necessary to success.”¹⁴⁰

Governor Bickett and the North Carolina Council of Defense saw similar effects in the agricultural sector. For those managing manpower, as related by Crowder in his second report on the draft, the fact that “There is no penalty attached to idleness or nonemployment” as a part of the Selective Service System meant that many jobs in “necessary” industries remained unfilled.¹⁴¹ More immediately, the fact that some men exempted from conscription were seen as “loafing” or being “idle” created friction with drafted men and their families. Such apparent lack of employment also infuriated Bickett: “No able-bodied man in the commonwealth should be allowed to dodge his contribution of labor... We cannot, during a great war, afford to have any unproductive consumers of food in our State. This is no time for parasites and idlers.”¹⁴²

While “Work or Fight” was the coercive use of the military draft to increase labor in wartime industries, the War Department also saw it as a measure to “improve morale” of the American people at the local level, “rather than source additional manpower” for the military.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Breen, *Labor Market Politics and the Great War*, 99-100.

¹³⁹ U.S. War Department, *Second Report of the Provost Marshal General to the Secretary of War on the Operations of the Selective Service System to December 20, 1918* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1919); Shenk, “*Work or Fight!*,” 3.

¹⁴⁰ U.S. War Department, memorandum, “Work or Fight Order for 1942. #1 Work Fight Order of World War I,” 2 Oct 1942, p. 1, “Work or Fight” Binder, Box 7, Langston Papers.

¹⁴¹ War Department, War Council Memo, 20 Mar 1918, p. 1, “Work or Fight” Binder, Box 7, Langston Papers.

¹⁴² Bickett, Proclamation to All Mayors and City Commissioners, 4 Mar 1918, Folder 8, Box 11, WWI 1.

But the emphasis on morale improvement gave way to increased focus on increasing employment in wartime industries by October 1918, as these businesses experiencing significant labor shortages. At that time, the War Department estimated a shortage of 1.5 million men, creating production slowdowns at exactly the moment American military participation in the war was at an all-time high. Under the “Work or Fight” order, the War Department moved to take control of underemployed or erroneously employed workers – or what they considered excess labor in the country – applying it to military requirements. To do this, Crowder employed the state and local draft boards to identify those men originally deferred to Classes II and III for dependency or other exemptions, but were currently unemployed, under-employed, or working non-essential activities, as categorized by the War Department. Holding the power of classification, Crowder threatened that “deferred classification on grounds of dependency would be revoked unless the registrant engaged in essential employment.”¹⁴⁴ Using this stick, the War Department hoped to create a “reservoir of manpower” that would not be sent overseas but could be shifted between U.S.-based military roles (such as limited-service jobs like clerks) or into war industry as labor requirements demanded.¹⁴⁵

Governor Bickett and the North Carolina Council of Defense were more than willing to take the “Work or Fight” order and use it to manage labor shortages. Compared to the War Department, Bickett and Hill were most concerned with men who abused dependency exemptions or were deemed vagrants, as discussed in the previous chapter. Using the men they appointed on Selective Service local boards, running state and national labor institutions, and the state and

¹⁴⁴ Revised Notes, Conference on Utilization of Manpower in War Industry, 25 Oct 1918, p. 1, “Work or Fight” Binder, Box 7, Langston Papers.

¹⁴⁵ Revised Notes, Conference on Utilization of Manpower in War Industry, 25 Oct 1918, p. 3, “Work or Fight” Binder, Box 7, Langston Papers. As one popular magazine captured, the War Department “wanted control over all males between eighteen and forty-five, the young and fit ones to go into the trenches, and the older and unfit, or semi-fit, to go into war industries,” Mark Sullivan, “Work or Fight: What the New Draft Must Accomplish,” *Collier's* 61, 7 Sep 1918, 13-14.

county Councils of Defense, Bickett and Hill pushed re-classification efforts to force an increase toward full wartime employment.

The North Carolina Council of Defense approached the enforcement of Crowder's "Work or Fight" order in two ways. First, the Council went through governmental channels, requesting mayors, city commissioners, and county commissioners to enact local ordinances for the punishment of vagrancy and to use their influence "to put every man and woman to work in some useful and necessary employment."¹⁴⁶ Some towns in the state were either ahead of the Council, or were amenable to their calls for local vagrancy laws, with towns like Greensboro and Asheville enacting them by the summer of 1918.¹⁴⁷ Council Chair Hill plainly recognized that "these [vagrancy] laws are perhaps of doubtful constitutionality and are liable to be thrown out by the Supreme Court."¹⁴⁸ However, time was on the side of those enacting such restrictions and manpower was crucial, so Hill felt that "we will just have to take the chance on that and use them until we are stopped. By that time maybe the war will be over and we will not need them so badly."¹⁴⁹ For Hill, the ends justified the means when it came to labor.

Second, the North Carolina Council of Defense leveraged its position as an intermediary institution to employ local individuals and organizations to enforce the laws.¹⁵⁰ Such approaches included the use of the Council of Defense System in the state by asking the "Committees on Labor Conditions [in the county Councils of Defense] to report...the names of all persons within the draft age who are not regularly employed, to the end that such persons may be called before the draft boards and re-classified and inducted into military service."¹⁵¹ Local knowledge of the people in each county was being used by the Council to coerce compliance with their labor needs.

¹⁴⁶ Meeting Notes, 29 Jun 1918, Folder 13, Box 13, WWI 1; Bickett to Mayors and City Commissioners, 4 Mar 1918, Folder 8, Box 11, WWI 1; Hill to Mayors, 6 Aug 1918, Folder 11, Box 8, WWI 1.

¹⁴⁷ Department of Labor to Hill, 14 June 1918, Folder 5, Box 3, WWI 1.

¹⁴⁸ Hill to Asheville Council of Defense, 9 Aug 1918, Folder 1, Box 12, WWI 1.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Hill to County Chairmen, 28 Jun 1918, Folder 10, Box 8, WWI 1.

¹⁵¹ Meeting Notes, 29 Jun 1918, Folder 13, Box 13, WWI 1.

Beyond the organizations subordinate to the state Council of Defense, Hill and the executive committee also urged “Ministers, teachers, doctors, speakers and members of the County Councils and others...to create a sentiment against loafing.”¹⁵² As was done in the initial push for men to register for the draft in June 1917, the state Council of Defense was using all its power to communicate and integrate private organized society into gaining compliance. By 1918, however, there were threats behind the request for support, rather than simply appeals to patriotism.¹⁵³

Bickett also charged the North Carolina Council of Defense to act as the adjudicator of vagrancy in the state.¹⁵⁴ In turn, Hill asked the county Councils to establish Employment Committees that ensured every citizen was “on somebody's pay-roll, or at work at least five days of each week.”¹⁵⁵ The issue was seen as so important by the Governor and Hill that the latter requested the chairs of the County Councils lead the Employment Committees personally.¹⁵⁶ If these committees found someone not usefully employed under their standards, or not working at least forty hours a week, they were to be given a warning and asked to find useful employment. If they did not do so in a timely fashion, the Council was to arrest them for vagrancy and remanded to the local draft board for reclassification.¹⁵⁷

This approach to labor shows the continuing preference by state leaders for business and the agricultural elite to exercise authority over workers, as well as the role of the North Carolina Council of Defense in maintaining the pre-war socio-political structures in the state during the

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*.

¹⁵⁴ Bickett, “All Men Must Work,” appeal to the public, Folder 2, GP 373.1; Hill to Mayors and Governing Boards, 6 Aug 1918, Folder 11, Box 8, WWI 1. Includes ordinances from Greensboro, Asheville, and New Bern as examples.

¹⁵⁵ E.J. Stafford and C.M. Vanstory, “Order from the State Council of Defense,” 14 Jun 1918, Folder 10, Box 8, WWI 1. For example, Vanstory to Hill, 13 Jun 1918, Folder 10, Box 8, WWI 1; Grady to Hill, 14 Jun 1918, Folder 10, Box 8, WWI 1; North Carolina Council of Defense, “Chairmen of Committees on Employment,” Folder 11, Box 8, WWI 1; Harvey to County Council of Defense, 15 Jul 1918, Folder 1, Box 12, WWI 1; North Carolina Council of Defense, *First Annual Report*, 17.

¹⁵⁶ Hill to County Chairmen, 12 Jun 1918, Folder 10, Box 13, WWI 1.

¹⁵⁷ Hill to Chairmen of the Committees on Employment, 28 Jun 1918, Folder 10, Box 8, WWI 1.

conflict. Siding with the state's economic elite, the rules the Council advocated for vagrancy put the onus of finding the 'right' job and being fully employed on individual workers, both of which were within the purview of employers, not labor. An example of this is the vagrancy ordinance passed by the Charlotte City Council, which was written to gain the support of employers who were struggling to find enough workers for the numerous wartime projects in the city, not least of which was the continued expansion of Camp Greene.¹⁵⁸

Support for vagrancy laws and the enforcement of "Work or Fight" orders undoubtedly had a racial component in North Carolina, particularly outside of the state's larger cities, with local elites communicating to Bickett and Hill from the beginning of the war that Black citizens were shirking their duty to work.¹⁵⁹ One such local farmer wrote to Bickett just weeks after the declaration of war that he was desperate for farm labor, but that "if you go in every colored store or pressing shop, you will find a large number of idle negroes which you cannot get to work for cash money."¹⁶⁰ At the same time, organized interest groups like the Commercial and Agricultural Association blamed overindulgence on available entertainment, which they felt Black citizens chose over work. According to these men, entertainment venues like pool rooms should be closed except in the evenings so that they could "round up the colored loafers, and put them to work, and with good results, morally and physically."¹⁶¹ Such loafing was not the case with the white population, of course, which "does not need further stimulation," according to the white men writing into state mobilization leaders, yet there was "a large fringe of undesirable colored loafers that ought to be attended to."¹⁶² Such sentiments fit squarely in the white

¹⁵⁸ Griffith to Hill, 2 Aug 1918, Folder 1, Box 12, WWI 1.

¹⁵⁹ The most comprehensive look at "Work or Fight" from a race (and gender) lens is Shenk, "*Work or Fight!*"

¹⁶⁰ Beasley to Bickett, 19 Apr 1917, Folder 2, Box 1, WWI 8; Dunn to Bickett, 26 Apr 1917, Folder 3, Box 1, WWI 8; Dunn to the North Carolina Food Conservation Committee, 27 Apr 1917, Folder 3, Box 1, WWI 8.

¹⁶¹ Dunn to the North Carolina Food Conservation Committee, 27 Apr 1917, Folder 3, Box 1, WWI 8.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

supremacist structural tendencies in North Carolina in this period. Businessmen, and particularly white farmers who depended on Black labor, consistently tried to use the war to exert control over Black men and women. Such desire for control only increased throughout the war as more than 28 million southerners, most of them African Americans, left the South in search of more lucrative employment and a less oppressive way of life.¹⁶³

Despite the need to rely more heavily on coercive measures to coax more labor out of a finite pool of workers, by the end of the war, the North Carolina Council of Defense was able to satisfy the wartime needs of the state. Food production increased, industrial production in support of the war was met, and the state leaders were able to maintain the pre-war hierarchies of power based in white supremacy and focused on the economic elites. Indeed, the Council increased the capability of the American associational state to surge manpower for industrial and agricultural wartime requirements.

Finding Efficiency and Building Effectiveness – Fuel and Finance in North Carolina

The mobilization of energy sources, primarily coal, in North Carolina paled in comparison to efforts required for food and labor. While individuals in the state used coal for heating their homes, the majority was used in industries requiring high heat, such as the smelting of steel. Little such manufacturing existed in the Old North State. Instead, tobacco, cotton, and textiles dominated the economy. Because of this, the main demand for fuel in the state came from coal distributors that serviced individual needs and the few industries that used the material.¹⁶⁴ Additionally, home use of coal for heat could easily be supplemented or replaced entirely by

¹⁶³ Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora*, 4-11.

¹⁶⁴ North Carolina Office of Archives and History, “The North Carolina Fuel Administration,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 1, no. 2 (1924): 139. The state Fuel Administration managed the requirements of 278 dealers and industries in the fall and winter of 1917 who were unable to get coal to continue their operations.

burning wood, an abundant resource in the state.¹⁶⁵ In fact, at the local level, the majority of individuals' interactions with mobilization around fuel involved the cutting and burning of wood on their own properties, or larger towns and cities acquiring wood and selling it at cost in the state's urban centers. These timber yards were managed by mayors or city commissioners and coordinated by local fuel administrators.¹⁶⁶

A relatively low demand for coal, complemented with an easily acquired complementary product like wood, meant that the mobilization around fuel was less about increasing production. Instead, North Carolina needed to only slightly adjust use to conserve for wartime industry, shift to wood to reduce demand, stabilize prices, manage labor disputes, and acquire transportation assets to move coal into the state.¹⁶⁷ Balancing these factors became the primary job of a state director for the Fuel Administration, who was named by the North Carolina Council of Defense and worked with businessmen in the state to ensure an "equitable distribution of fuel...at the most reasonable price to the consumer consistent with a fair margin of profit to the dealers in the commodity."¹⁶⁸ This practical approach was in line with the scientific, progressive approach taken by the Fuel Administration in general.

Even more than the Food Administration, the Fuel Administration was driven by an ideology of efficiency. Such efficiency, according to adherents, came from government providing direction and encouragement, but then getting out of the way to allow business to run the effort in their way and according to their own interests.¹⁶⁹ According to this framework, the Fuel Administration simply needed to "extend methods of economic efficiency from the individual

¹⁶⁵ This approach was supported by the State Forester and the U.S. Forest Service, Joseph Hyde Pratt, *Biennial Report of the State Geologist, 1917-1918* (Raleigh, N.C.: North Carolina Geological and Economic Survey, 1919), 95.

¹⁶⁶ Robert Cuff, "Harry Garfield, the Fuel Administration, and the Search for a Cooperative Order During World War I," *American Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 39-40.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 46-47; Kennedy, *Over Here*, 123.

¹⁶⁸ Harry A. Garfield, "Final Report of the United States Fuel Administrator, 1917-1919" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Fuel Administration, 1921), 233; Cuff, "Harry Garfield," 48.

¹⁶⁹ Cuff, "Harry Garfield," 42-43.

industrial corporation to the national organism as a whole” to gain the efficiency it needed to manage the mobilization of the nation’s fuel supply, as historian Robert Cuff has summarized.¹⁷⁰ To accomplish this goal, the federal Fuel Administrator, Harry Garfield, emulated the decentralized approach seen in the War Department’s conscription and the Food Administration. Garfield sought to decentralize administrative power and authority, placing both at the state level in the appointing of state Fuel Administrators that could “carry out its national program for relieving and improving fuel conditions.”¹⁷¹ This state office could also support regional and local efforts to mitigate railroad shortages, stabilize prices, and most importantly, act as a buffer between the industry and angry citizens over the shortage of heating material.¹⁷²

This business-centered approach allowed businessmen and political elites in the state to influence the mobilization efforts around fuel by participating in the state Fuel Administration, beginning with the state Council naming successful businessman Alexander W. McAlister as the state Fuel Administrator.¹⁷³ McAlister was a well-known leader in the state, having founded and owned numerous real estate and insurance companies for decades, as well as serving as the president of the North Carolina’s Social Services Conference and as a member of the State Board of Charities and Public Welfare. The state Council members were confident that McAlister’s connections and experience would lead to an efficient, robust organization around fuel

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 43-44. Cuff is quoting Charles P. Steinmetz, an industrial engineer and corporate theorist, but attributing these ideas as foundational to Fuel Administrator Harry Garfield’s own thinking. Charles P. Steinmetz, *America and the New Epoch* (New York, N.Y.: Harper, 1916), 125-26, 151, 156.

¹⁷¹ Garfield, “Final Report,” 232.

¹⁷² A. W. McAlister, “Statement of A. W. McAlister, State Field Administrator, before the Meeting of the State and County Councils of Defense, Raleigh, N.C., October 5, 1917,” p. 3, Folder 7, Box 11, WWI 1; Robert Cuff, “Harry Garfield,” 44.

¹⁷³ Porter to Hill, 8 Sep 1917, Folder 5, Box 2, WWI 1; Garfield, “Final Report,” 232; Hill to Porter, 15 Sep 1917, Folder 5, Box 2, WWI 1; Porter to Wilson, 6 Nov 1917, Folder 7, Box 2, WWI 1; McAlister to Hill, 17 Sep 1917, Folder 10, Box 10, WWI 1; Pratt, “History of the North Carolina Council of Defense,” 308; North Carolina Office of Archives and History, “The North Carolina Fuel Administration,” 138.

management.¹⁷⁴ As he established a state presence for the national Fuel Administration, McAlister relied heavily upon the North Carolina Council of Defense to organize down to the local level and generate the manpower support he would need.¹⁷⁵ McAlister established county Fuel Administration Boards, built from and cooperating with the county Councils of Defense.¹⁷⁶ Over a quarter of the county Fuel Administration Board chairs were also county Council members.¹⁷⁷ The robust integration with both the state and county Councils of Defense would continue when the leadership of the state Fuel Administration passed to Robert C. Norfleet, a businessman and previous county Fuel Administrator in Forsythe County, in the summer of 1918.¹⁷⁸

As a state with little viable commercial coal deposits, the primary tasks of the state Fuel Administration were increasing supply without production and encouraging conservation. The state addressed fuel supply in three ways. First, according to national Council member George Porter, it set fuel prices that would result in “the lowest possible price to the consumer consistent with reasonable profit to the operator.”¹⁷⁹ Setting the prices in this way stabilized demand in the state, while also reducing the impact of coal shortages on the consumer, and thereby managed the anger of businessmen and individual consumers.¹⁸⁰ The state Fuel Administration relied upon the county Councils of Defense to determine demand and shortages across the state, using their personnel to survey local towns and cities and recommend how they could best address the

¹⁷⁴ McAlister to Hill, 24 May 1918, Folder 7, Box 11, WWI 1; North Carolina Council of Defense, *First Annual Report*, 10-11.

¹⁷⁵ McAlister to Hill, 17 Sep 1917, Folder 10, Box 10, WWI 1.

¹⁷⁶ Porter to Wilson, 6 Nov 1917, Folder 7, Box 2, WWI 1; Garfield, “Final Report,” 233-234.

¹⁷⁷ Bissett and Finney database.

¹⁷⁸ Hope to Hill, 12 Jun 1918, Folder 5, Box 3, WWI 1; Hill to Hope, 13 Jun 1918, Folder 5, Box 3, WWI 1; Woolen to State Fuel Administrators, 12 Aug 1918, Folder 7, Box 11, WWI 1; Pratt, “History of the North Carolina Council of Defense,” 308; North Carolina Office of Archives and History, “The North Carolina Fuel Administration,” 151-152.

¹⁷⁹ Porter to Wilson, 6 Nov 1917, Folder 7, Box 2, WWI 1.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

heating requirements of the winter months.¹⁸¹ These efforts were conducted in coordination with similar work being done in the state by the Food Administration, both overseen and managed by the state Council of Defense.¹⁸²

The second way the Fuel Administration dealt with coal supply was to better coordinate transportation assets. As McAlister recognized in the fall of 1917 when talking to the state and county Councils of Defense, “Our country's problem is not a mining problem, it is a transportation problem. It is not so much a problem of production as it is a problem of distribution.”¹⁸³ The U.S. Fuel Administration dealt with this transportation challenge by breaking up the country into zones that allowed a given region the ability to manage railroad assets in coordination with the Railroad Administration.¹⁸⁴ Multiple times during the war, the North Carolina Fuel Administrator was able to coordinate the use of additional cars to increase the supply of coal in the state based upon state industrial requirements and to meet the increased need for individual use brought on by an unexpectedly cold winter in 1917-1918.¹⁸⁵

Finally, the Fuel Administration in the state worked to conserve as much fuel as possible, declaring that it was “up to every consumer of coal to have such a realization of the preciousness of that article [coal] that he will no more use coal needlessly and wastefully than he would recklessly shovel loaves of bread into his fires.”¹⁸⁶ The primary way such conservation was achieved was through the use of wood as a supplement for coal, leaving the latter for businesses that required them.¹⁸⁷ The state Fuel Administration encouraged towns and cities to set up municipal wood yards to distribute and sell wood at cost. Like the movement of coal in the state, the Fuel Administration also managed transportation of wood closely. Its officials pushed for

¹⁸¹ Hill to Pate, 3 May 1918, Folder 4, Box 3, WWI 1.

¹⁸² Porter to Wilson, 6 Nov 1917, Folder 7, Box 2, WWI 1.

¹⁸³ McAlister, “Statement of A.W. McAlister,” p. 1, Folder 7, Box 11, WWI 1.

¹⁸⁴ North Carolina Office of Archives and History, “The North Carolina Fuel Administration,” 146-147.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 142.

¹⁸⁶ McAlister, “Statement of A.W. McAlister,” p. 3, Folder 7, Box 11, WWI 1.

¹⁸⁷ Pratt, *Biennial Report of the State Geologist, 1917-1918*, 95.

those cutting wood to keep it local when selling it, thereby preventing its movement from tying up railroads and reducing any possible competition from distant and larger markets that could drive up prices.¹⁸⁸

The relatively small demand for coal in the state ultimately meant fuel management was a minor issue, both logistically and politically. The North Carolina Council of Defense selected able administrators who could rely upon the Council of Defense System in the state to communicate and manage the limited amount of work. In turn, the state Fuel Administrator did not require much from – nor did he have much to provide – the federal government, leading to little friction or concern over federal-state relations. The state Fuel Administration efficiently did its work, not degrading the capability of the overall national effort, nor requiring any significant power to maintain North Carolina’s socio-political order.

The final area in which the North Carolina Council of Defense coordinated resources in the state was in the field of war finance. When entering the war, President Wilson and his Treasury Secretary, William G. McAdoo, were determined to develop “emergency measures that would do the least possible violence to the monetary and business arrangements that had proved so profitable in the neutrality period,” to quote historian David Kennedy.¹⁸⁹ The measures they settled on included the selling of bonds, the collection of additional taxes, and the printing of additional hard currency, known as money creation. In the end, according to economist Hugh Rockoff, “the bulk of the war effort (58 percent) was financed by borrowing from the public; the

¹⁸⁸ McAlister to Local Fuel Committees, “Wood and Price Regulation,” Circular Letter #15, 27 Dec 1917, in Pratt, “History of the North Carolina Council of Defense,” 310; Robert C. Norfleet, “North Carolina Report to the U.S. Fuel Administration,” 27 Dec 1918, in George Edwin Howes, “Report of the Administrative Division, 1917-1919” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Fuel Administration, 1920), 267; Daughters of the American Revolution Craighead-Dunlap Chapter, *Anson County in the World War* (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards & Broughton Company, 1929), 366-367.

¹⁸⁹ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 101.

remainder about evenly split between taxes (22 percent) and money creation (20 percent).”¹⁹⁰

While the states, North Carolina included, did not address the last issue, they did have to manage the explosion of fundraising efforts in the state that were created by the war.

The primary way in which the North Carolina Council of Defense supported the management of financial resources during the war were through the sale of Liberty Bonds (also called Liberty Loans). Unlike the mobilization measures instituted by the Food and Fuel Administrations, which required sacrifice from most Americans, “the Liberty bonds were priced to sell purely as financial investments,” wrote Rockoff. “No individual who bought a Liberty bond actually made a personal sacrifice in the sense that they earned a much lower rate of interest than could have been earned on a comparable bond of similar risk.”¹⁹¹ In other words, citizens could purchase the bonds without damaging their prosperity in the long run. By the end of the war, the Treasury had opened four rounds of Liberty Bond sales, each at increasing rates of interest. Americans ably met the financial challenge, subscribing to approximately eighteen billion dollars’ worth of bonds.¹⁹²

Eventually, the Treasury also offered Thrift Stamps and War Savings Stamps tailored for less affluent citizens.¹⁹³ Whereas Liberty Bonds cost an average of fifty dollars, citizens could purchase Thrift Stamps for as little as twenty-five cents. When an individual possessed sixteen such stamps, they could be turned in for a War Savings Stamp, worth five dollars at maturity in 1923. Multiple War Savings Stamps could be affixed to a certificate for safekeeping until they

¹⁹⁰ Hugh Rockoff, “Until It’s Over, Over There: The U.S. Economy in World War I,” Working Paper 10580 (Cambridge, M.A.: National Bureau of Economic Research, June 2004), 8; Richard C. Sutch, “Financing the Great War: A Class Tax for the Wealthy, Liberty Bonds for All,” SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, N.Y.: Social Science Research Network, September 15, 2015), 9.

¹⁹¹ Rockoff, “Until It’s Over, Over There,” 12.

¹⁹² Beamish and March, *America’s Part in the World War*, 400-403; Kennedy, *Over Here*, 100-101.

¹⁹³ Rockoff, “Until It’s Over, Over There,” 14.

were turned in for cash. This system is similar to today's certificates of deposit (CDs) in that a specific amount of money can be spent to attain a set interest rate at a future date.¹⁹⁴

The sale of Liberty Bonds and War Savings Stamps was also a key way to generate pro-war popular sentiment, using them to create not only financial support, but increase morale and buy-in amongst American citizens.¹⁹⁵ The state Council of Defense, particularly through their subordinate county Councils, were key actors in organizing and mobilizing people to buy Liberty Bonds and War Savings Stamps.¹⁹⁶ The first Liberty Loan campaign was less effective than expected, largely due to its lack of any real organization, coming just on the heels of the declaration of war in early April 1917. After this campaign, the Council of National Defense was encouraged by McAdoo to allow the Treasury Department to use the state and local Councils in support of the second campaign in October. For its part, as seen in Hill's first report to Governor Bickett, the North Carolina Council of Defense quickly agreed to not only cooperate with national Liberty Loan personnel, but also to throw "the weight of their organization" into the campaign.¹⁹⁷ For example, the Council established Liberty Loan chairs in each county and township, which were then coordinated through the county Councils of Defense, who interfaced with local bankers' committees.¹⁹⁸ Once again, the manpower of the state Council System was needed by the federal government to achieve its wartime requirements.

Local bankers were the backbone of the Liberty Loan Committees, as they managed the actual sale of the bonds. But the work of the bankers was coordinated through the Council of

¹⁹⁴ Beamish and March, *America's Part in the World War*, 403-404.

¹⁹⁵ Sung Won Kang and Hugh Rockoff, "Capitalizing Patriotism: The Liberty Loans of World War I," *Financial History Review* 22, no. 1 (April 2015): 75-76; Kennedy, *Over Here*, 105-106.

¹⁹⁶ Page to Hill, 14 June 1917, Folder 4, Box 12, WWI 1; Brown to Hairston, 5 Oct 1917, Folder 4, Box 12, WWI 1; Hill to County Chairmen, 8 Oct 1917, Folder 4, Box 12, WWI 1; Hill to Porter, 23 Oct 1917, Folder 6, Box 2, WWI 1; Bowler to Hill, 21 Nov 1917, Folder 4, Box 12, WWI 1; North Carolina Council of Defense, *First Annual Report*, 11.

¹⁹⁷ North Carolina Council of Defense, *First Annual Report*, 11; Hill to County Chairmen, 8 Oct 1917, Folder 4, Box 12, WWI 1.

¹⁹⁸ Hill to Porter, 15 Nov 1917, Nov 1917, Folder 7, Box 2, WWI 1; McCormick to Hill, 25 Oct 1917, Folder 4, Box 12, WWI 1.

Defense and supported by their robust publishing, speaking, and other public pressure campaigns. The Council also organized and coordinated volunteer speakers, encouraged women on the Councils of Defense to use their influence with their fellow women, and integrated groups from organized society, like the Y.M.C.A. and even local Boy Scouts, into the sale of bonds.¹⁹⁹ The Council also used their connections with the local Chambers of Commerce, most especially the Raleigh Chamber, which included Governor Bickett on their board of directors.²⁰⁰ Black communities in the state were also represented in the drive to raise war funding, with Durham's North Carolina Mutual and Provident Association, led by John C. Merrick, Dr. Aaron M. Moore, and Charles C. Spaulding, subscribing to 100,000 dollars in Liberty Bonds.²⁰¹ Additionally, Merrick and company purchased 300,000 dollars in War Savings Stamps which it sold to Black families across the state.²⁰² By the end of the Second Liberty Loan campaign, North Carolina raised about five million dollars, exceeding the desired number of subscriptions requested by the Treasury Department.²⁰³

North Carolina saw similar success in subsequent campaigns, largely due to the active involvement of the state and county Councils of Defense and the dedicated work of their personnel. Coordinating Liberty Loan campaigns was demanding and continual. The result was that the chairs of committees managing the Liberty Loan campaigns could not undertake any other work.²⁰⁴ Chairs of county Councils of Defense and of committees at the state and county level ended up having to choose between the broader work of the Councils or the demanding

¹⁹⁹ McCormick to Brown, 15 Oct 1917, Folder 4, Box 12, WWI 1.

²⁰⁰ Bowler to Hill, 15 Dec 1917, Folder 4, Box 12, WWI 1.

²⁰¹ R. McCants Andrews, *John Merrick: A Biographical Sketch* (Durham, N.C.: The Seeman Printery, 1920), 103, quoting Treasury Secretary McAdoo from the *State Journal* (Raleigh), "Colored People With Heads Up" from May 10, 1918.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 104.

²⁰³ Matthew Peek, "North Carolina and the 2nd Liberty Loan Drive," North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, 31 October 2017, <https://www.ncdcr.gov/blog/2017/10/31/north-carolina-and-2nd-liberty-loan-drive>, accessed 13 Sep 2021.

²⁰⁴ Broughton to Hill, 14 Aug 1918, Folder 5, Box 12, WWI 1.

work of selling Liberty Bonds. Many Councils dealt with this by pushing the management to a committee, which coordinated with local banks and connected participants in the work with the head of Liberty Loans in the state, Joseph G. Brown.²⁰⁵ Brown was appointed by Hill at the request of Governor Bickett based upon his reputation in North Carolina as the president of the Citizens National Bank in Raleigh.

To manage the sale of War Savings Stamps, the state Council appointed Francis H. Fries, president of the Wachovia Bank and Trust Company and former president of the North Carolina Bankers Association. Fries established so-called “institutes” throughout the state to educate county Council chairs and other leading men and women of the state on the value of War Savings Stamps and innovative ways to encourage individuals to purchase them.²⁰⁶ The delegates of these institutes also tied into Farmers’ Institutes, originally designed to educate agricultural workers on the newest farming techniques, to encourage farmers to buy thrift stamps.²⁰⁷ The intersection of mobilization activities involving food and financing is another example of the compression of the work that took place in North Carolina, as well as the integral work of the Councils of Defense and the individuals they appointed to increase resource management in the state. While the sale of War Savings Stamps had little impact on the funding of the war overall, they were key instruments in engaging less affluent members of society by literally acquiring their buy-in. This helped to generate the consent of state citizens for wartime work, as well as increase the Councils’ capability by integrating men and women into various mobilization activities.

²⁰⁵ Brown to Hairston, 5 Oct 1917, Folder 4, Box 12, WWI 1; North Carolina Council of Defense, *First Annual Report*, 11.

²⁰⁶ Fries to the North Carolina Council of Defense Executive Committee, 4 Feb 1918, Folder 399, Box 31, John Bryan Grimes Papers. Includes a program of events for an institute in Raleigh for 12-13 Feb 1918; Wilson to Porter, 19 Feb 1918, Folder 10, Box 2, WWI 1; State Councils Section, Weekly Report No. 29, 4 Mar 1918, Folder 5, Box 6, Robinson Papers; North Carolina Council of Defense, *First Annual Report*, 12.

²⁰⁷ Grimes to Fries, 14 Jan 1918, Folder 397, Box 31, John Bryan Grimes Papers; State Councils Section, Weekly Report No. 49, 22 Jul 1918, Folder 5, Box 6, Robinson Papers.

Another way the North Carolina Council of Defense supported the raising of money for the war was through the implementation of the personal income tax. The income tax was passed by Congress as a part of the Revenue Act of 1913, co-sponsored by Senator Furnifold Simmons of North Carolina.²⁰⁸ This act, already focused on raising taxes from the more affluent in the country to pay for reductions in tariffs, was converted to make sure “the rich would bear the main burden of paying for the war,” according to economist Hugh Rockoff.²⁰⁹ While the majority of the war was funded by average Americans via the Liberty Bonds, the income tax did provide a quarter of the revenue needed to finance the conflict.²¹⁰ To collect this tax, the Treasury petitioned the Council of National Defense to use their Council System, specifically by tying the Treasury Departments’ federal Collector of Internal Revenue into the state Council. The use of the state Council of Defense System by the Treasury Department allowed them to tap into local manpower and, according to the secretary of the state Council, W.S. Wilson, placing “the facilities of the State and County Councils at the disposal of the government in properly administering this law.”²¹¹ The state and county Councils also helped to publicize the requirement to pay the income tax, in line with their promotional efforts regarding Liberty Bonds and War Savings Stamps. Once again, through its access to volunteer labor in the state that could be applied to mobilization, the state Council of Defense was able to both increase the overall

²⁰⁸ United States, Congress, Land Opening Act, 10 Aug 1917, Public Law 63-15, 38 Stat. 113, 63rd Congress, 1st Session, https://congressional-proquest-com.proxy.lib.duke.edu/congressional/docview/t41.d42.63_pl_15?accountid=10598, accessed 26 Jan 2022; Sheldon D. Pollack, “Origins of the Modern Income Tax, 1894–1913” *The Tax Lawyer* 66, no. 2 (Winter 2013), 325-326.

²⁰⁹ Rockoff, “Until It’s Over, Over There,” 11.

²¹⁰ Beamish and March, *America’s Part in the World War*, 400. For more on the importance of the income tax to American state building, and war and revenue generally, see Pollack, *War, Revenue, and State Building*, 246-252.

²¹¹ Wilson to County Chairmen, 22 Dec 1917, Folder 14, Box 11, WWI 1; Porter to the North Carolina Council of Defense, 11 Dec 1917, Folder 8, Box 2, WWI 1; State Councils Section, Minutes of Regular Staff Meeting, 11 Dec 1917, Folder 2, Box 6, Robinson Papers; J.W.B. to Hill, 13 Dec 1917, Folder 8, Box 2, WWI 1; Roper to Collectors of Internal Revenue, 11 Dec 1917, Box 16, Folder 10, Box 2, WWI 1; McCormick to Wilson, 26 Dec 1917, Folder 13, Box 22, WWI 1.

capability of the national government, while still ensuring they maintained control over its use toward state preferences. In the case of the financing of the war, the state Council was willing to support national efforts because it generated outward support for the war and expanded state knowledge of resources – both where financial resources were coming from and where they were being spent.

Finally, the state Council became the hub, and indeed the approving authority, for non-governmental fundraising during the war. From the declaration of war until the Armistice, new causes and organizations proliferated, each requesting donations from American citizens, the government, and organized interests. The coordination of fundraising included the efforts needed by the Red Cross, the Y.M.C.A./Y.W.C.A., the War Camp Community Service, and various service and protection leagues.²¹² By the summer of 1918, national and state leaders recognized that ordinary Americans were feeling fatigue from the calls for support, possibly inhibiting the raising of future Liberty Bonds and War Stamps. In response, leaders throughout the Council of Defense System called for increasing centralization of fundraising. The need for centralized fundraising approval led to the creation of a list of private organizations that should be approved for fundraising, as well as prioritization of what organizations the Councils of Defense should actively support. The national Council refused to endorse any private organizations, apart from the Red Cross, which possessed a link to the national government through a Congressional Charter.²¹³ Instead, the national Council's officials pushed the adjudication of fundraising in the state to the North Carolina Council as the primary organization dealing with local private organizations. The state Council was also best able to understand and mitigate the overwhelming

²¹² Postlethwait to Harvey, 22 Jan 1918, Folder 15, Box 16, WWI 1.

²¹³ American Red Cross, *Charter and By-Laws of the American National Red Cross* (Washington, D.C.: Gibson Bros., Inc., 1917).

work of raising funds and resultant burn-out.²¹⁴ The state Council would become the approving authority for fundraising in North Carolina, wrote Hill to the national Council, assuring that “there will be no solicitations in the State without the comment of the State Council, and none in the counties without the County Councils’ consent.”²¹⁵ Since the national Council would not provide guidance on approved charities, the state Council decided to focus their efforts around the United War Workers Campaign, led by North Carolina Council executive member George W. Watts, which found multiple organizations working together to share donations through a broad campaign.²¹⁶ The organizations supported included the Commission on Training Camp Activities, the Salvation Army, the War Camp Community Service, the Y.M.C.A./Y.W.C.A., the Knights of Columbus, the American Library Association, and the Jewish Welfare Board.²¹⁷

The results generated by the North Carolina Council of Defense in supporting the financing of the war indicate that the Council was of critical importance for the success of local efforts to raise funding for the war.²¹⁸ Without the employment of state citizens and the integration of organized society, the U.S. Treasury Department would have not been able to meet its goals, as evidenced by the difference between the results of the First Liberty Loan Campaign and all the subsequent ones. The failure to meet the desired sales in April 1917 was primarily due to rushed organization. By the time of subsequent campaigns, the Council was completely organized and able to put its full organization into selling Liberty Bonds and War Savings Stamps. The Council was also charged to raise income taxes and adjudicate on fundraising in the

²¹⁴ Grimes to Mayo, 17 May 1918, Folder 404, Grimes Papers; Hill to Scarborough, 15 Jun 1918, Folder 5, Box 3, WWI 1; Hill to Porter, 15 Jul 1918, Folder 6, Box 3, WWI 1; North Carolina Council of Defense, *First Annual Report*, 15-16.

²¹⁵ Hill to Porter, 15 Jul 1918, Folder 6, Box 3, WWI 1.

²¹⁶ Hill to Fleming, 24 Sep 1918, Folder 8, Box 3, WWI 1.

²¹⁷ Woodrow Wilson, *United War Work Campaign: A Letter from Woodrow Wilson*, pamphlet, 3 Sep 1918, 2007.243.12, National WWI Museum and Memorial, Kansas City, M.O., <https://theworldwar.pastperfectonline.com/archive/A7B15D09-823D-4A8D-A211-353359053736>, accessed 13 Sep 2021.

²¹⁸ This is contrary to the focus on the national picture described in Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 25.

state, both of which increased the capability of the national state to fund the war both directly through taxes, and indirectly by funding key support programs that supported soldiers and their families.

Conclusion

Writing to local county agents at the end of the war, state Council of Defense Chair D.H. Hill recognized that, “Although the war is apparently ended our country will have to feed the starving multitudes of Europe for a year or two,” and therefore the work to conserve and increase the production of some resources would continue.²¹⁹ However, with the end of the conflict, there was little incentive or public will to continue wartime emergency measures, let alone volunteer to sacrifice. Even within the state Council of Defense, members quickly worked to divest themselves of their wartime duties, wishing to return to the businesses, farms, law firms, and other daily jobs that had been neglected during the war. Most of the functions of the North Carolina Council of Defense were either abandoned or, in the case of planning and preparing to transition the economy for a post-war world, left to a State Reconstruction Committee.²²⁰ This Committee was appointed by Governor Bickett in 1919, but only held one meeting, failing to gain traction or interest from political elites or the states’ citizens. Notably, only two members of the statewide Council of Defense System, Raleigh lawyer and state Council of Defense Legal Committee member James Pou and Asheville resident and Buncombe County Council of Defense Chair Fred Seeley, were placed on the committee.²²¹ The failure to take advantage of the lessons learned from almost two years of resource and political management by the state Council of Defense indicates the weariness of the state and the desire to simply move on from the war.

²¹⁹ Hill to County Demonstration Agents, 9 Nov 1918, Folder 2, Box 1, WWI.

²²⁰ Hill to Talbot, 5 Mar 1919, Folder 6, Box 4, WWI 1.

²²¹ Turner to Pratt, 27 Dec 1929, Folder 12, Box 19, WWI 1; Parker to Pratt, 6 Jul 1933, Folder 13, Box 19, WWI 1.

An element of the state Councils' work that the new Reconstruction Committee could have employed to leverage wartime centralization at the state level into the post-war political economy was the Council's "war boards." These meetings, by the spring of 1918, served to coordinate the work of national agencies, state organizations, and elements of organized society through the management of the state Council.²²² Already the intermediary institution for state mobilization efforts, through the war boards, the North Carolina Council of Defense was able to coordinate even more tightly the federal organizations in the state that were led by the men they chose to manage their interests. This was the ultimate expression of the Council's strategic choices in who managed the federal agencies in the state, allowing the Council to coordinate not only statewide efforts and private actions at the local level, but the direction of the federal activities in the state.

Despite the alacrity with which the state gave up its guidance and control of statewide political and economic mobilization at the end of the First World War, the North Carolina Council of Defense's management of resource management during the conflict was significant. Their work resulted in the state expanding its capability to support the wartime efforts of the national state. The control over appointments and mobilization of volunteers, in turn, allowed the North Carolina Council of Defense to ensure that the activities undertaken in the state in support of the nation's war efforts took into consideration local social and political interests.

²²² U.S. Food Administration to State Administrators, "Conference of State Representatives of Federal Departments or Administrations," 9 Mar 1918, Folder 4, Box 9, WWI 8; State Councils Section, Minutes of Regular Staff Meeting, 6 Mar 1918, Folder 2, Box 6, Robinson Papers; Gifford to Hill, 6 Mar 1918, Folder 1, Box 3, WWI 1; Gifford to State Councils of Defense, 20 Apr 1918, General Letter No. 71, Folder 11, Box 29, WWI 1; Allen, *The Council of Defense System*, 144.

Chapter 4:

“Making Ourselves More Efficient in Home Service”: Women & the Bifurcation of War Work in the First World War¹

Writing in the popular monthly woman’s magazine *Ladies’ Home Journal* in the early days of America’s mobilization for the First World War in 1917, Secretary of War Newton Baker recognized that “men and women are essential partners in industrial and commercial civilization, in any modern civilization.”² On the same page, Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, the head of the Woman’s Committee of the Council of National Defense, agreed, but took the argument further. America could no longer view the efforts of women as “merely supplementary to those of men,” she wrote. Instead, “women should become integral parts of all bodies organized for war work.”³ Frequently invoked by the women who joined the mobilization, “woman power” was viewed as the complement, and at times supplement, to manpower, which was employed as men were drafted into uniform and sent overseas to fight in France. “Woman power” was also a term used by women themselves as a way to capture their importance to America’s mobilization, positioning themselves on an equal footing with men and “manpower.” Capturing the complementary sentiment of “woman power” in her first annual report, the chair of the Woman’s Committee in North Carolina, Mrs. James Eugene (Laura Holmes) Reilley, wrote, “The real

¹ Laura Holmes Reilley, “Woman’s Committee, North Carolina Division, State Council of National Defense, First Annual Report, 15 July 1918, p. 11, Box 17, Folder 8, WWI 1.

² Anna Howard Shaw, “The Woman’s Committee of the United States Council of National Defense,” *Ladies’ Home Journal* 35, no. 3 (March 1918), 30. The *Ladies’ Home Journal* was the most subscribed publication in America at the time of the First World War, becoming “the monthly Bible of the American home,” according to its editor, Edward Bok, Jennifer Scanlon, “Redefining Thrift: The Ladies’ Home Journal and the Modern Woman,” *Pennsylvania Legacies* 12, no. 2 (November 2012): 12-17.

³ *Ibid.*

problem [of finding enough people for wartime work] began to be acute after the first draft.”⁴ Continuing, Reilley recognized that the shortage of manpower brought about by the draft, in addition to the increase in activity required on the home front to support a war, would lead to “further development of woman’s work and woman’s power” to meet the needs of the country for the war.⁵

As Emily Blair, a member of the national Woman’s Committee, explained in her history of that organization written in 1920, the country needed the American government to recognize the ability of women to increase the economic, political, and social might of the nation, “substituting it, in trade, in industry, in the mechanism of Government and finance, for the man power [sic] which had been removed to the front line battle trenches.”⁶ In essence, “woman power” was simultaneously two things: the potential increase in capability women provided for wartime activities, while also the tool with which women could demonstrate and tangibly gain equality with men.⁷ This was exactly how Reilley and the North Carolina’s Woman’s Committee

⁴ Reilley, “First Annual Report,” p. 8, Box 17, Folder 8, WWI 1. As was customary at that time, Reilley is always referenced in reports and even subsequent secondary material via her husband’s name, Mrs. James Eugene Reilley. The remainder of this article will dispense with this and reference her as either Laura Holmes Reilley, Laura Reilley, or just Reilley.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Emily N. Blair, *The Woman's Committee, United States Council of National Defense: An Interpretive Report: April 21, 1917 to February 27, 1919* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1920), 13. For more on Blair, who was a fixture in the suffrage movement, the Woman’s Committee, and women and politics following the war, see Emily Newell Blair and Virginia Jeans Laas, *Bridging Two Eras: The Autobiography of Emily Newell Blair, 1877-1951* (Columbia, M.O.: University of Missouri Press, 1999).

⁷ Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War* (New York, N.Y.: D. Appleton and Company, 1918), 17, 29, quoting investigative journalist and Vice Chair of the national Woman’s Committee, Ida Tarbell; Blair, *An Interpretive Report*, 18. The term “woman power” is used exclusively by women themselves in different mediums to distinguish their specific contributions to the mobilization. When communicating to their fellow women, it is usually in the context of encouraging other women to take part. When used to communicate to men, usually in reports, it details the breadth of work done by women. An example for the former can be found in the monthly column by Dr. Shaw in the *Ladies’ Home Journal*, such as “The Woman's Committee of the United States Council of National Defense,” *Ladies’ Home Journal* 34, no. 9 (September 1917), 3 or the 1917-1918 yearbook of the North Carolina Federation of Women’s Clubs, 20. For examples of the latter, see Woman’s Committee of the Council of National Defense, *Bulletin No. 1* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1917), 1-2 and Woman’s Committee of the Council of National Defense, *Report of Activities of the Woman’s Committee of the*

understood the idea – a potential resource that the Committee needed to identify, organize, and employ to meet the wartime needs of the state and nation, thereby showing the worth of women to male political leadership.⁸ Both the national and state Woman’s Committees were clear, as captured by Blair, that they “contemplated nothing less than the mobilization of the woman power of the whole country” and that the location of such mobilizations of power would be accomplished at the state level.⁹

In her capacity as both the state Woman’s Committee chair and a member of the North Carolina Council of Defense, Reilley navigated the relationships necessary to create a place for women in wartime mobilization activities. She would be challenged, however, by class- and race-based tensions between women in the state, the patriarchal views of southern society and its elites, and the challenges posed by conflicts between federal, state, and local politics. Throughout the war, as indeed before the United States entered it, the people of North Carolina and the elites who drove wartime mobilization made distinctions between different groups of women in the state based on class, race, and other factors, such as marital status. The distinctions would come to shape how and where women of different areas, classes, and races would be included or excluded from mobilization activities, despite elite rhetoric, including from Reilley herself, about building an organization of women throughout the state that allowed every citizen to, “give her best toward the building of this great organization for war.”¹⁰

Council of National Defense: April 21, 1917 to April 21 1918 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918), 9, 16, 23.

⁸ North Carolina Woman’s Committee, Meeting Notes, 8 June 1917, Folder 7, Box 17, WWI 1.

⁹ Blair, *An Interpretive Report*, 19.

¹⁰ Laura Holmes Reilley, *Report of the Woman's Committee of the North Carolina Division of the State Council of National Defense, 1917-1918*, in North Carolina Office of Archives and History, *The War Governor: Thomas Walter Bickett, 1917-1921*, Digital Project, Governor Thomas W. Bickett Papers, <http://mosaicnc.org/document/2574>, accessed 28 October 2020.

This chapter explores the efforts of the North Carolina Council of Defense to mobilize women for wartime work while maintaining pre-war political and social control over the inclusion and exclusion of women. Challenged by the need to organize and energize North Carolinians to address the vast requirements of the conflict – from the mobilization of men for the military to the production and conservation of resources needed for the war – the Council sought to maintain the social and political dominance of North Carolina’s one-party, paternalistic, white supremacist order. The state Council, as the intermediary institution coordinating the state’s response to the war, was the organization that navigated the tension between the need to include ever-larger numbers of people in mobilization activities and retain control over those whom political elites wished to remain subordinate. To accomplish this goal, the leaders of the Council decided when, where, and how to integrate citizens normally circumscribed from participation into state activities into mobilization, including women.

Long prevented from full participation in the civic life of North Carolina, women in the state experienced different levels of inclusion and exclusion in mobilization activities. Additionally, the state Woman’s Committee itself participated in the use of inclusion and exclusion among the women of the state. Run by middle-class and wealthy white women tied (frequently through marriage) to the state’s social, economic, and political elites, the women coordinating mobilization constrained who could participate in which activities based upon class and race, themselves upholding pre-war social and political norms based in patriarchy and white supremacy. Unlike the efforts by the North Carolina Council of Defense described in previous chapters, the actions taken to circumscribe the ability of women to participate in all wartime activities inhibited the overall capability of the state to support national requirements. Preventing the complete inclusion of women in mobilization was a calculated choice, choosing control over an increase in overall capability. The circumscription of women’s participation evolved over

time, affected in part by the federal government's insistence on their inclusion. While North Carolina did not bow completely to the national government, it did incorporate women more quickly than would have been expected without federal pressure.

This chapter argues that the politics of inclusion and exclusion employed by the North Carolina Council of Defense directly impacted the integration of women into the state's mobilization for the First World War. The state elites who participated in and directed the actions of the Council of Defense were products of, and stakeholders in, the patriarchal, white-supremacist socio-political order of North Carolina. While many, including Governor Thomas Bickett, were more Progressive than past state leaders on many issues affecting women, they still fundamentally believed in a state that was socially and politically dominated by white men. These beliefs, in addition to social and political cleavages around class, race, and marital status, manifested in how the state Council structured itself and coordinated activities during the war.

The dynamics of the state's socio-political order allowed for the inclusion of women in mobilization in particular ways, leading to a bifurcation of work along gender lines and the dominance of women's organizing by middle-class white women. In particular, women of all classes and races were able to make gains in supporting efforts that fit within the traditional "female dominion" – activities like the management of food and the care of families – but were stymied in other areas, specifically those that intruded upon men, including industrial work and labor policy.¹¹ Additionally, the quick and robust organization of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense, including the naming of a representative to North Carolina, provided incentive for Bickett to appoint a woman to the state Council to take control of this nascent intrusion by the federal government to meddle in state affairs, such as how women would

¹¹ Discussion of the "female dominion" will be more detailed later in the chapter. The term is drawn from Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1991).

be integrated into mobilization and who would lead such efforts. The inclusion of Reilley on the Council immediately gave women in the state a literal seat at the table.¹² The politics of inclusion and exclusion employed by the North Carolina Council of Defense, however, was key in mediating federal desires that went contrary to state elite interests. By taking oversight of the national Woman's Committee in the state, the Council was able to maintain sovereignty on an important issue to state elites, as well as prevent any challenges to the socio-political order during the relative instability of a wartime mobilization. In the end, at least according to the desires of North Carolina's male elites managing the mobilization, the Council of Defense's efforts were successful. They were able to create enough support to increase state and national capability for the war where needed (e.g., food conservation, raising of funds, and prevention of any challenges to state power), while preventing any demonstrable change to the social and political status quo of their patriarchal, white supremacist, one-party state.

This chapter begins by discussing the opportunities and challenges American women found upon U.S. entry into the First World War and explores the creation of the Woman's Committee as a subordinate part of both the national Woman's Committee in Washington, D.C. and the North Carolina Council of Defense. The chapter then analyzes the activities undertaken by women in North Carolina and details how women's work was bifurcated along gender lines, allowing the state Council of Defense to control the inclusion of women in wartime activities. Finally, the chapter details the shuttering of women's activities at the end of the war and how the failure of the Woman's Committee to promote women's activism outside of the female dominion reflected the priorities of the men on the North Carolina Council of Defense, who saw such constraint in the expansion of women's roles in the state as a success in the defense of the pre-war social order and gender and racial hierarchies.

¹² More accurately, it gave white, elite women a seat at the table. As will be discussed later, class and race issues were endemic to organizing women in the state, as well as nationally.

Structuring the State Woman's Committee

As the United States entered the war in 1917, middle-class white women across America vociferously offered support and asked where they could best be put to work. In response, men supported and at times advocated for women to take up war work. Drawing on existing woman's groups and associations in the larger organized society, women mobilized themselves to support their nation at war. Though not all women actively joined the war effort, those who did joined for myriad reasons; from a sense of a shared civic obligation to trying to create support for increased civil rights, and as an extension of their maternal duties to pushing the boundaries of the kinds of work in which women could engage. For that reason, the structures created for home front mobilization during the war incorporated both extant conceptions of woman's work, as well as possible opportunities to expand beyond them.¹³

The primary structure coordinating the mobilization was the Council of Defense System, led in North Carolina by the state Council, which linked national governmental agencies to the state government, as well as the state government to local communities and private interest

¹³ Elisabeth S. Clemens, *Civic Gifts: Voluntarism and the Making of the American Nation-State* (Chicago, I.L.: University of Chicago Press, 2020); Lynn Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense: American Women and World War I* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Julia F. Irwin, *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation's Humanitarian Awakening* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2017); Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2008); Kimberly Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War* (Urbana, I.L.: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Dorothy Schneider and Carl J. Schneider, *Into the Breach: American Women Overseas in World War I* (New York, N.Y.: Viking, 1991); and William J. Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home: Civilian Mobilization, Wartime Federalism, and the Council of National Defense, 1917-1919* (Westport, C.T.: Greenwood Press, 1984).

groups such as woman's clubs and associations.¹⁴ North Carolina was a late convert to the Council of Defense System. Governor Bickett only created the North Carolina Council of Defense after receiving pressure from the federal government and the national Woman's Committee in Washington, D.C. pushed the issue by naming Reilley a temporary chair of their subordinate organization in the Old North State.¹⁵ Bickett subsequently included Reilley on the executive committee of the state Council of Defense, also allowing her to create a state Woman's Committee to coordinate the work of women during the state's mobilization. However, the North Carolina Women's Committee would report to the state Council and not just the national Woman's Committee in Washington, D.C., as originally intended. Reilley's role, and the function of her committee, would be to coordinate the efforts of women in the state – both individually and as members of organized society – to support mobilization activities in North Carolina. In effect, the Woman's Committee would generate and manage “woman power” at the state level, coordinating between federal and local actions, while also acting as an intermediary mechanism for private efforts to complement and enhance areas in which the public sector struggled to address. Bickett's inclusion of Reilley extended the wartime efforts of the associational state to the mobilization of women.

¹⁴ The most comprehensive book on the Council of Defense System is Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*. When addressing the role of the Council of Defense System, Breen states unequivocally, “The state council system filled the gap between the federal government and the states and, particularly, the people of the states,” 200.

¹⁵ Reilley had served as the president of the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs, as well as vice president of the national Federation of Women's Clubs and Equal Suffrage League, Mrs. H. P. Shumway and Mrs. Philip N. Moore, “Mrs. Eugene Reilley, Charlotte, North Carolina,” pp. 2-3, circa 1925, Box 6, Charles Leonard Van Noppen Papers, 1881-1935, Rubenstein Library Special Collections, Duke University, Durham, N.C. (hereafter Van Noppen Papers); Gertrude S. Carraway, *Carolina Crusaders: History of North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs* (New Bern, N.C.: Owen G. Dunn Company, 1941), 30-33. Archibald Henderson, “North Carolina Women in the World War: An Address” (Raleigh, N.C.: North Carolina Literary and Historical Association, 1920), 2; Joseph Hyde Pratt, “History of the North Carolina Council of Defense,” p. 19, unpublished manuscript, circa 1932, Box 1, Folder 1, WWI 1; Sarah Wilkerson-Freeman, “Women and the Transformation of American Politics: North Carolina, 1898-1940,” PhD diss. (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina, 1995), 305.

The creation of a Woman's Committee subordinate to the state Council of Defense indicates that Bickett understood the importance of including women in mobilization activities and sought a measure of control over how and in what areas women were employed in support of the state.¹⁶ Nationally, the conflicting dynamics of needing to include women but also desiring a measure of control resulted in the bifurcation of work according to gender, with some activities being coordinated by men on the one hand, and women on the other. The bifurcation of work was further segregated by class and race, particularly in southern states like North Carolina.¹⁷ Ultimately, this bifurcation of the management of war work provided women considerable flexibility in managing areas men willingly ceded as the female dominion.¹⁸ But it also created friction in areas where their work overlapped with men's concerns or in areas that tested traditional boundaries of class, gender, and race requiring "continual renegotiation of those limitations," according to historian Robin Muncy.¹⁹ Dorothy and Carl Schneider, in analyzing the role of women in the war, also identify how the bifurcation of work based on gender became a

¹⁶ Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva*, xiii.

¹⁷ While wartime work was segregated by gender, there was also significant segregation of effort along racial lines, with the states subordinating Black and other minority mobilization actions to local white efforts without any real direct representation, including in North Carolina. For more on race in First World War mobilization, see Arthur E. Barbeau, Florette Henri, and Bernard C. Nalty, *The Unknown Soldiers: African-American Troops in World War I* (New York, N.Y.: Da Capo Press, 1996); William G. Jordan, *Black Newspapers and America's War for Democracy, 1914-1920* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Chad L. Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers and the Era of the First World War* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); and Adriane Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 2011).

¹⁸ Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion*, xii. Anita Anthony VanOrsdal, "'There Shall Be No Woman Slackers': The Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense and Social Welfare Activism as Home Defense, 1917-1919," PhD diss. (East Lansing, M.I.: Michigan State University, 2016) also covers the way in which women chose welfare activism, or as she terms it "home defense," as a way to expand their role in the war and also protect their interests in women, family, and children. This was also the position of Black women. See Lillian Serece Williams, et al., eds., *Records of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, 1895-1992*, microform, Black Studies Research Sources in Cooperation with Research Collections in Women's Studies (Bethesda, M.D.: University Publications of America, 1993), Reel 23; Mrs. Addie W. Dickerson, "The Status of the Negro Woman in the Nation," *National Association Notes* 17, no. 3 (Jan-Feb 1915): 3-9, and M.S. Pearson, "The Home," *National Association Notes* 19, no. 4 (Jan 1917): 11-13.

¹⁹ Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion*, xii.

way to temporarily resolve the necessity for including women in the mobilization until the end of the war, as “society found itself able to adjust to changes in women’s roles when they suited society’s ends.”²⁰ Women were needed to organize and support many aspects of the home front mobilization, particularly in areas considered the province of women, such as caring for the home and family and the morality of state citizens. In these areas, the men leading mobilization provided space and resources to Reilley and the Woman’s Committee to help them organize the women of the state.²¹

Bickett and the men leading the Council of Defense were also determined to maintain the stability of the extant socio-political order in the state during the war, including retaining hierarchies of political, economic, and social power based in gender and race.²² To ensure this, the Council of Defense constrained the work of the Woman’s Committee in areas social conventions of men – and many women – had previously prevented their participation, including industrial work and political activism. The leaders in the state were able to inhibit, in their minds, too much social or political change in North Carolina by constraining the ability of women to expand into these areas.

The formation of a state-level committee run by women and coordinating the mobilization of “woman power” in southern states was a major development, given the entrenched opposition to the changing roles of women, such as the refusal to grant women the right to vote and other expanded rights. Opposition was based in the conservative nature of southern society, a conservatism that had returned in force after the national government

²⁰ Schneider, *Into the Breach*, 10, 265; Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 88-93.

²¹ While the state Council only provided \$677 to the Woman’s Committee throughout the war, this was the third highest disbursement, following only the paying of clerks (almost exclusively women) and the printing and postage for the Council’s communications. W.S. Wilson, “Final Financial Report,” p. 6, Folder 4, Box 1, WWI 1.

²² Coercion, violence, and repression were long tools for “stability” by white supremacy, covered in Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy*, 17: “violence served as a tried-and-true strategy for maintaining a sense of stability to a precarious racial hierarchy.”

abandoned Reconstruction in 1877 and many white southerners recreated a new white supremacist order at the turn of the twentieth century. At this time, hierarchies of power based in race, patriarchy, and elite rule were re-instituted, most violently seen in the Wilmington Coup of 1898 when white Democrats overthrew the legitimately elected biracial Republican-Populist fusion government.²³

Once white dominance was re-established in the state, the elite felt secure to undertake more economically Progressive policies and support increased social uplift in North Carolina for white citizens, while ensuring the formerly enslaved were unable to access it.²⁴ Where Progressivism elsewhere in the country was dedicated to the extension of popular rights and self-government, in the South its approach was tailored, as historian Jack Temple Kirby has argued, to a “conserving or restorative impulse” stemming from “traditional values,” leading to a movement based in revanchism over reform.²⁵ The men that populated the state government of North Carolina and the leaders of white woman’s groups in the state were all committed to the politics

²³ Angela Robbins, “‘Doing Their Big Bit’: North Carolina’s Women on the Homefront,” Shepherd W. McKinley and Steven Sabol, eds., *North Carolina’s Experience during the First World War* (Knoxville, T.N.: University of Tennessee Press, 2018), 250; David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson, *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); East Carolina University, “Politics of a Massacre,” <http://core.ecu.edu/umc/wilmington/index.html>, accessed 18 Oct 2020; Wilmington Race Riot Commission, 1898 Wilmington Race Riot Report (Raleigh, N.C.: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 2006), <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p249901coll22/id/5842>, accessed 18 Oct 2020.

²⁴ C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge, L.A.: Louisiana State University Press, 1951). Racial, and gender, uplift was a key area in which Black women worked diligently. See Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy*, 99-103; Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*; Alice Dunbar-Nelson, “Negro Women in War Work,” in Emmett J. Scott, *Scott’s Official History of the American Negro in the World War* (Chicago, I.L.: Homewood Press, 1919); Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense*.

²⁵ Jack Temple Kirby, *Darkness at the Dawning: Race and Reform in the Progressive South* (Philadelphia, P.A.: Lippincott, 1972), 41. There are different interpretations as to the driving factor for Southern Progressivism. One is race, as covered by Kirby; another is sheer partisanship, with race being more a factor of which party they belonged to, rather than a causal factor, as detailed by J. Morgan Kousser, *The Shaping of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and the Establishment of the One-Party South, 1880-1910* (New Haven, C.T.: Yale University Press, 1974).

of white supremacy, and the men likewise dedicated to the continuation of patriarchy.²⁶

Adherents to the white supremacist and patriarchal socio-political order included the chair of the state Council of Defense, D.H. Hill, Jr., who, according to Reilley, “does not want to cooperate with us, he is simply a gentleman of the old school and is slow and unprogressive.”²⁷ As historian Janet Hudson has explained, the social and economic challenges posed by a national mobilization for the First World War, “threatened the stability of the existing racial [and gendered] hierarchy” in the South.²⁸ Mobilization efforts including a national draft, labor shortages, Black migration, new volunteer and employment opportunities for African Americans and all classes of women, and patriotic support for a world “safe for democracy” all threatened the institutional disenfranchisement of women and African Americans that was foundational to North Carolina’s socio-political order.

In this political and social milieu, southern women had a decidedly “unfixed status.”

Unable to vote and not meaningfully represented in local or state government, women’s “status varied according to the group of men to whom she applied,” wrote national Woman’s Committee

²⁶ Published primaries on Bickett’s speeches, policies, and correspondence are a great example of his Progressive views on the law, governance, and the economy, while also capturing his patriarchal views and avocation of a “whites only” Progressivism. Thomas Walter Bickett, Sanford Martin and R. B. House, *Public Letters and Papers of Thomas Walter Bickett, Governor of North Carolina, 1917-1921* (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1923). On the racial segregation among women, see Wilkerson-Freeman, “Women and the Transformation of American Politics,” 298; Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*; Elna C. Green, *Southern Strategies: Southern Women and the Woman Suffrage Question* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Anne Firor Scott, “Most Invisible of All: Black Women’s Voluntary Associations,” *The Journal of Southern History* 56, no. 1 (Feb 1990): 3–22; William J. Breen, “Black Women and the Great War: Mobilization and Reform in the South,” *Journal of Southern History* 44, no. 3 (1978): 421–40, 421–40; Anastatia Sims, “Feminism and Femininity in the New South: White Women’s Organizations in North Carolina, 1883-1930” (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina, 1985); Charles Harris Wesley, *The History of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs: A Legacy of Service* (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs, Inc., 1984).

²⁷ Quoted in Penelope N. Brownell, “The Women’s Committees of the First World War: Women in Government, 1917-1919,” PhD diss. (Providence, R.I.: Brown University, 2002), 49-50.

²⁸ Janet G. Hudson, *Entangled by White Supremacy: Reform in World War I-Era South Carolina* (Lexington, K.Y.: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 2; Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy*, 17.

member Emily Blair.²⁹ Therefore, a woman's ability to achieve successes in politics or in the civic arena were dependent on her ability to create coalitions with or convince men – specifically white men – to support the effort. This could be achieved either through individual action or the creation of interest groups that could lead the change that such groups of women believed was needed. The principal mechanism for organizing and mobilizing women from the late nineteenth century to the First World War were voluntary woman's groups, associations, or clubs, which provided an avenue for the inclusion of women in political and social issues of the day, though such groups were segregated by race.³⁰ White middle-class women gathered to study literature and civics for self-improvement. Black women worked together to prevent lynching and other racially and politically motivated violence.³¹ Both white and Black women undertook social reform projects that included starting schools, building libraries, and lobbying for sanitation and child welfare. Both groups of women also each worked to uplift the members of their communities through the teaching of the latest trends in home economics and mobilize for issues like the right to vote.³² According to historian Penelope Brownell, in some ways these groups “resembled political parties more than private associations” as they elected leaders, voted their

²⁹ Blair, *An Interpretive Report*, 22-23, 39, 46, 108, 118-119; Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion*, xii; Sims, “Feminism and Femininity in the New South,” 1.

³⁰ Krome-Lukens, “The Reform Imagination,” 5, 28; Kathryn Anderson, “Practicing Feminist Politics: Emily Newell Blair and U.S. Women's Political Choices in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Journal of Women's History* 9, no. 3 (1997): 50–72. The primary umbrella groups that coordinated various women's groups in the state were the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs for white women, of which Reilley was a president, and the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, which included Charlotte Hawkins Brown as an active member and secretary. Sallie Southall Cotten, *History of the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs 1901-1925* (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1925) and Williams, *Records of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs*.

³¹ Scott, “Most Invisible of All,” 19; Patricia Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); McCoy to Shillady, 20 and 24 May 1918, Folder 36, Group I, Series G, Box 148 (N.C. Branch Files), NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereafter NAACP Papers); Williams, *Records of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs*, Reel 6, “Black Spots on the Map” pamphlet (Atlanta, G.A.: Commission on Interracial Cooperation, 1922).

³² Joan M. Johnson, *Southern Ladies, New Women: Race, Region, and Clubwomen in South Carolina, 1890-1930* (Gainesville, F.L.: University Press of Florida, 2004), 1; Sims, *The Power of Femininity in the New South*, 105; Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion*, xi-xiii.

agendas, and actively recruited new members.³³ However, the areas in which they focused their attention allowed women to avoid social and political backlash based on observable ties to traditional women's work. The exception to this was mobilization and agitation for the right of women to vote and the protection of Black men and women from violence, both areas staunchly opposed by political elites across the South. In North Carolina, suffrage for women failed to gain popular support, and racial violence only increased after the war.

Women's groups were the driving force and organizational backbone behind the creation of Woman's Committees and their wartime work, from the national to the local level.³⁴ The women that participated and led these various organizations, as detailed by the Council of National Defense, were selected or requested by the national Woman's Committee to lead efforts to provide "a clearinghouse for all women's war work" and would avoid competing with extant organizations, instead leading the way to coordinate with them and reduce inefficiency.³⁵ Dr. Shaw, for example, was selected for leadership of the national Woman's Committee based on her role in leading the National American Woman Suffrage Association prior to the war.³⁶ And Reilley was selected as the chair of the North Carolina Woman's Committee because of her work with the Federation of Women's Clubs and Equal Suffrage League in that state and nationally.³⁷

³³ Brownell, "The Women's Committees of the First World War," 50-51; see also Wilkerson-Freeman, "Women and the Transformation of American Politics."

³⁴ They also provided the structure and personnel in other local mobilization organizations, such as the American Red Cross. E.G. Hulse, *Granville County in the World War* (Oxford, N.C.: Press of Oxford Orphanage, 1920), 171.

³⁵ U.S. Council of National Defense, *Annual Reports of the United States Council of National Defense, 1916-1920* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1917), 46; U.S. Council of National Defense, Committee on Women's Defense Work, *Report Covering A Year's Activities Up To April 21, 1918* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918), 10; Pratt, "History of the North Carolina Council of Defense," 101; Cotten, *History of the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs*, 120-122; VanOrsdal, "'There Shall Be No Woman Slackers,'" 23-24.

³⁶ William L. O'Neill, *Everyone Was Brave: A History of Feminism in America* (New York, N.Y.: Quadrangle, New York Times Book Co., 1969), 186.

³⁷ "Mrs. Eugene Reilley," *General Federation Bulletin* (Boston, M.A., United States), vol. 18, 4 (Apr 1919), 18; Shumway and Moore, "Mrs. Eugene Reilley," 2-3; William J. Breen, "Southern Women in the

The first formal meeting of the North Carolina Woman's Committee took place in June 1917, shortly after Reilley's appointment to the executive committee of the state Council of Defense. Reilley immediately leveraged her position on the state's Council to create an intermediary role for her committee, calling together all the leaders of women's organizations in the state, as well as the leading women of the major cities and towns to represent the 'unorganized' women of the state who did not belong to any private group or association. Held in the Senate Chamber of the State Capitol in Raleigh, this gathering of sixty-eight women established the associational structure and functions of the state Woman's Committee, including confirming Reilley as the chair and the election of other officers to manage the different departments that would drive women's war work by the Committee.³⁸ The ability of the private women's groups to support the state in organizing "woman power" during the First World War is evident. The entirety of the executive board of the Woman's Committee were previously leading members of state or local women's groups, including each of the district chairs (established at the congressional district level), and all but two of the eighty-eight county chairs of the Woman's Committee.³⁹

North Carolina's white supremacist politics of exclusion shaped the mobilization of "woman power" throughout the war. This can be seen in the composition of the Woman's Committee in the state, led by Reilley, who were all white and middle-class women. No Black women were invited or meaningfully integrated into the Woman's Committee, despite their

War: The North Carolina Woman's Committee, 1917-1919," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 55, no. 3 (1978): 253.

³⁸ North Carolina Woman's Committee, Meeting Notes, 8 June 1917, Folder 7, Box 17, WWI 1.

³⁹ Reilley, *Report of the Woman's Committee of the North Carolina*; Carraway, *Carolina Crusaders*, 49.

enthusiasm to participate in the state's wartime activities, the profligacy of Black woman's organizations in the state, and national level encouragement to include them in mobilization.⁴⁰

A month before the end of the war, the national Woman's Committee sent a Black field representative, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, to assess the integration of Black women into state mobilization activities, including North Carolina.⁴¹ While Reilley seemed rhetorically open to the idea of incorporating a Black field agent under her own committee when meeting with Dunbar-Nelson, it is unclear whether she would have actually done so, as the end of the war forestalled any further progress on mobilization.⁴² Even had she been accepted, writes historian Lynn Dumenil, it is likely that such a Black field representative would have only been employed "when need for specific activities arose" as this "kept black women not only subordinate but also virtually invisible to the larger society."⁴³ Token appointments of Black individuals as conduits of information was a tactic also used by the men's Council, discussed in the next chapter.

The Bifurcation of War Work

The establishment of separate areas of work for women in North Carolina mirrored the approach of wartime work of their national level counterpart in Washington, D.C. Reilley pushed to more comprehensively leverage women to participate fully in the mobilization at the state level, just as Shaw did at the national level. Speaking to state Council representatives, Shaw

⁴⁰ U.S. Council of National Defense, Field Division, General Letter No. 4, 8 Oct 1918, Folder 11, Box 28, WWI 1; Breen, "Black Women and the Great War," 421-40; Breen, "Southern Women in the War," 278; Barbara J. Steinson, *American Women's Activism in World War I* (New York, N.Y.: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1982), 348-349; Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense*, 44-45, 60; Wesley, *The History of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs*, 78-79; Scott, "Most Invisible of All," 5.

⁴¹ Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy*, 100-101.

⁴² Breen, "Black Women and the Great War," 426; Nancy F. Cott, *Women and War* (Berlin, G.E.: Walter de Gruyter, 1993), 141. Gilmore sees integration in Reilley's efforts at various points, but I believe it was less integration than Reilley and others trying to ensure Black women were not able to organize separately, not necessarily working in concert. Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 195.

⁴³ Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense*, 86-87; Brownell, "The Women's Committees of the First World War," 90-91; Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 178.

stated without “any well-defined plan of work,” there was an opportunity for women to coordinate and direct work in areas well-represented by woman’s groups and accepted by American society, as well as a possibility to “create those new lines of service” that best engaged women.⁴⁴ However, Shaw continued, leaders of the woman’s committees believed that women were also required to “be the calm, well-disciplined, home-loving people who are to keep harmony and the conditions of society and the Government from being disturbed.”⁴⁵ This balance between pushing for the most effective work for women and not disturbing the harmony of society during wartime was a key theme in the work done in North Carolina by the Woman’s Committee, particularly as an argument for preventing the integration of Black women.⁴⁶

The mobilization activities undertaken by the Woman’s Committee to harness the state’s “woman power” can be broken into three broad categories of work: preservation of the home, relief, and woman’s defense work.⁴⁷ Within these three conceptual categories were eleven committees overseeing specific types of work for the state Woman’s Committee, each led by a chair and coordinated by Reilley and her executive board. Each area included activities by individual women, private groups, and public agencies, all coordinated by the Woman’s Committee as an intermediary of the wartime associational state in North Carolina. Work for the preservation of the home included food administration and home economics, food production, and health and recreation. Relief work incorporated home and foreign relief, the maintenance of existing social service agencies, and child welfare. Finally, woman’s defense work involved publicity, educational propaganda, Liberty Loans, registration for service, and women in

⁴⁴ Rexford L. Holmes and the United States Council of National Defense, “National Defense Conference Held Under the Auspices of the Council of National Defense, May 2 and 3, 1917,” Transcript of Proceedings, Washington, D.C., 1917, 227-229; Henderson, “North Carolina Women in the World War,” 2; Anna Howard Shaw to Hannah Patterson, 16 October 1917, Folder 161, Box 473, RG 62, NARA.

⁴⁵ Holmes, “National Defense Conference,” 227.

⁴⁶ See, for instance, 6 Jul 1917 Reilley to Hill, Folder 7, Box 17, WWI 1; Brownell, “The Women’s Committees of the First World War,” 8-11; Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense*, 60.

⁴⁷ Blair, *An Interpretive Report*, 21.

industry.⁴⁸ Each of these three broad areas of work provide a different angle from which to observe the bifurcation of work based on gender, the exclusion of Black women, the impact of class, and the negotiation of woman's war work during the mobilization. The success, or lack thereof, achieved by women in each area indicated which were "congruent with their visions of themselves as progressive reformers" as well as with men and society in general, versus those that required negotiation or were so contentious that Reilley and her Committee were excluded by the state Council and therefore unable to make headway during the war.⁴⁹

At the outset of North Carolina taking up mobilization in 1917, war work was divided into separate spheres – 'men's work' and 'women's work' – although there was an understanding that most areas would require significant cooperation between the groups headed by women and those headed by men.⁵⁰ Some areas, however, could be more clearly identified as women's work than others, and none more so than the managing and upkeep of the home and family. Of particular importance was the conservation and production of food, a key element of the war effort both at home and abroad. As one local official in Granville County recounted, "Money and food were the things needful to carry on the war," and in the area of food in particular, women were "the foundation stone on which [America's] whole economic structure is built."⁵¹ Money could be raised through bonds and loans or dollars could be printed outright, but as journalist Ida Clarke wrote about the war, "all assets become valueless from a military point of view unless there is a food supply sufficient to sustain the armed forces and the civilian population."⁵²

⁴⁸ The Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense, *Organization Charts, May 1917-1918* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918), 13; Reilley, *Report of the Woman's Committee of the North Carolina*; Nevada Davis Hitchcock, "The Mobilization of Women," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 78 (July 1918), 24-31.

⁴⁹ Krome-Lukens, "The Reform Imagination," 23.

⁵⁰ U.S. Council of National Defense, *Annual Reports*, 1917, 46.

⁵¹ Hulse, *Granville County in the World War*, 190; Blair, *An Interpretive Report*, 22.

⁵² Clarke, *American Women and the World War*, 61.

As discussed in the previous chapter, America found itself in a poor position to produce and ship food to its military forces in France, let alone to sustain the civilian population. Before entering the war, the United States sent most of its surplus foodstuffs in support of Britain, France, and Russia to help “Win with food,”⁵³ as Anna Shaw declared in 1917. According to historian William Breen, lack of food in the state led leaders, including the Woman’s Committee, to spend significant time and effort to convince its citizens “to do everything in their power to conserve and enlarge the existing food supply.”⁵⁴ These efforts included encouraging housewives to sign Herbert Hoover’s Food Administration pledge cards to reduce consumption and waste, avoiding scarce products like wheat and meat, and teaching the women of the state the most efficient ways to preserve produce through canning and other methods.⁵⁵ Most efforts regarding food boiled down to the idea that, as Shaw wrote to readers of the *Ladies’ Home Journal*, “Kitchen efficiency is practical patriotism” and waste was the enemy of patriotic American citizens.⁵⁶ Engagement across the state was significant and engaged women of all classes and races. Tens of thousands of women and girls engaged in conservation efforts that preserved close

⁵³ Anna Shaw, “The Woman’s Committee of the United States Council of National Defense,” *Ladies’ Home Journal* 34, no. 8 (August 1917).

⁵⁴ Breen, “Black Women and the Great War,” 436.

⁵⁵ Women largely ended up being used as “foot soldiers” when it came to their direct employment by Hoover. See Steinson, *American Women’s Activism*, 312-313. To the latter issue, such “home demonstrations” were another key area that women, middle-class white urban women in particular, gravitated toward, leading to most counties in North Carolina each preserving tens of thousands of cans of food in a year, Mabel Tate and Naomi Neal, *Women and the War in North Carolina: A Partial Report of the Work of Women in North Carolina During the First Year of the War, April 2, 1917-April 2, 1918* (Greensboro, N.C.: State Normal and Industrial College, 1918), 3; Brownell, “The Women’s Committees of the First World War,” 79-133.

⁵⁶ Anna Shaw, “The Woman’s Committee of the United States Council of National Defense,” *Ladies’ Home Journal* 34, no. 8 (August 1917); one of the most enjoyable sources that address these issues is an allegorical play written to shame men and women alike for their consumption habits, personifying both “Waste” as a fashionable, demon-like character “of the cabaret type,” and “The Defender of America” as a khaki-clad private of the Army. Gail Wilson, *WASTE: An Allegorical Play* (New York, N.C.: Rand McNally & Company, 1919); Joshua Fulton, ““Your Duty on Display”: The Allied War Exhibition in Chicago, the State Council of Defense, and the Role of the State in Defining American Identity,” in *Proceedings of Armistice & Aftermath: A Michigan Tech Symposium on WWI* (Armistice & Aftermath: A Michigan Tech Symposium on WWI, Houghton, M.I.: World War I & the Copper Country, 2018), 18.

to ten million cans of food each year for 1917 and 1918.⁵⁷ This element of woman's war work encountered little resistance from southern society.⁵⁸ Because of the dire need of food for the war and the local nature of food conservation efforts, canning and jarring of fruits and vegetables was also an area in which there was broad cross-race engagement, with North Carolina's chair of the Food Administration Committee of the Women's Committee, Jane McKimmon, leading outreach to Black women, ultimately integrating them onto her staff after the war, though only as assistants to white agents.⁵⁹

Another key area when it came to food was in its production: the sowing and growing of more crops to meet wartime requirements. Here, again, the Woman's Committee was largely able to ensure their inclusion and increase the state's capability to meet national requirements. Committee members encouraged the growing of "war gardens" to reduce the fruit and vegetable needs of individuals during the war, as well as demonstrations detailing timing and types of vegetables to plant.⁶⁰ Broad success in the planting of gardens can be attributed to the relatively low amount of effort required to plant them, making them an appealing – and visible – activity for the primary audience for the Woman's Committee: middle-class women. Less successful were efforts focused on getting women in the city to support their counterparts on farms in the state, despite federal agencies' exhortations to do so to reduce labor shortages and increase food production.⁶¹ Ideas included encouraging city women to do household chores for local farm

⁵⁷ Jane S. McKimmon, "Fifth Annual Report of Home Demonstration Work, 1917-1918," in the "Second Annual Report of the N.C. Agricultural Extension Service," p. 32, Box 234.1, McKimmon Papers; Jane S. McKimmon, "Sixth Annual Report of Home Demonstration Work, 1917-1918," in the "Third Annual Report of the N.C. Agricultural Extension Service, p. 51, Folder "1917-1918," Box 234.1, McKimmon Papers; Breen, "Southern Women in the War," 265; Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense*, 99-104.

⁵⁸ Henderson, "North Carolina Women in the World War," 8; Breen, "Southern Women in the War," 265.

⁵⁹ Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 197-198; Cotten, *History of the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs*, 95; Carraway, *Carolina Crusaders*, 45.

⁶⁰ Reilley, *Report of the Woman's Committee of the North Carolina*.

⁶¹ Clarence Ousley, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, *Women on the Farm: An Address before the Woman's Committee, Council of National Defense, May 13, 1918* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Library), 12; Anna Shaw, "The Woman's Committee of the United

women so the latter could focus on agricultural production, whether in support of the men of their family, or in lieu of the men if they had been drafted into the military. Some also pushed for city women to engage in agricultural work in the fields themselves. With the exception of a handful of students from the women's State Normal and Industrial College (now University of North Carolina–Greensboro), which organized a "Farmerettes" group for summer work on farms, few women flocked to the fields.⁶² The Food Production Division of the Woman's Committee, and Reilley in particular, did not place much emphasis on expanding their work into broader agricultural production as they, as middle-class white women, worried about the implications of forcing women into the fields. They instead focused on convincing individual women to plant war gardens at home.⁶³ It is not a surprise, therefore, that the mostly middle-class women who supported Reilley's efforts in North Carolina primarily supported food production via home gardening.⁶⁴

Attending to the health and recreation of American citizens was a favorite pastime of Progressive reformers across the nation. It was also a key area of woman's war work in North Carolina. While this area of work included the sanitation and healthcare of cities in general, in practice, the activities around Army cantonments and camps was their primary focus. Women worked diligently to create a "wholesome social environment and supervised recreation" for soldiers, wrote Reilley, as well as "girls of the community," and families of soldiers both in

States Council of National Defense," *Ladies' Home Journal* 35, no. 2 (February 1918); Anna Shaw, "The Woman's Committee of the United States Council of National Defense," *Ladies' Home Journal* 35, no. 6 (June 1918).

⁶² Robbins, "'Doing Their Big Bit,'" 254-255. These Farmerette groups did spawn a Department of Labor run "Woman's Land Army" initiative in 21 states, but despite the positive press Robbins details in this chapter, derived from propaganda pamphlets, it had little overall impact in North Carolina or nationally. This, of course, does not take away from the innovative and selfless manual labor these women performed day in and day out over the summers of 1917 and 1918.

⁶³ Brownell, "The Women's Committees of the First World War," 122.

⁶⁴ Reilley, *Report of the Woman's Committee of the North Carolina*.

residence and those visiting during training.⁶⁵ A focus by the Woman's Committee on these areas expanded even further by the end of the war to the prevention of young women of outlying towns and cities from traveling to the camp cities. The focus of middle-class and other elite women on managing the activities of women supporting camp activities (licit and illicit) can undoubtedly be viewed through the lens of class, as camp followers throughout time tended to be composed of women of lower classes. There was also a racial element to women's work regarding the training camps. Black women were able to have a large impact through the provision of support to soldiers, creating and running Hostess Houses and Y.W.C.A. facilities for Black soldiers, particularly at Camp Greene outside Charlotte. Due to the segregated nature of the training – and of southern society more broadly – white officers and local white women left Black women to minister to their men.⁶⁶

The Woman's Committee leveraged multiple organizations and mechanisms to police behavior that fell broadly under the heading of "social hygiene," which was narrowly defined around the prevention of sexual activity and its attendant issues of alcohol consumption and venereal diseases. Such mechanisms of prevention included the creation of supervised social clubs, canteens, and house stays, as well as the institution of patrols by groups of women around areas used by alleged "deviants" and the creation of detention houses for women viewed as "promiscuous."⁶⁷ As mentioned previously, there is an undeniable class element to the

⁶⁵ Ibid. Henderson, "North Carolina Women in the World War," 7-8. By the end of the war, North Carolina had three major training cantonments in the state: Camp Bragg in Fayetteville, Camp Polk outside Raleigh, and Camp Greene in Charlotte, the last of which was the largest, more than doubling the city's pre-war population of 45,000. Kurt D. Geske, "Where Johnnie Got His Gun: Charlotte and Camp Greene," McKinley and Sabol, *North Carolina's Experience during the First World War*, 21-22.

⁶⁶ Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 196; Dunbar-Nelson, "Negro Women in War Work," 385; Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense*, 47; Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy*, 99-103.

⁶⁷ Reilley, *Report of the Woman's Committee of the North Carolina*; Laura Holmes Reilley, "Future Work Plan of the Committee on Women's Defense Work," Report to Governor, second half of 1918, North Carolina Office of Archives and History. *The War Governor: Thomas Walter Bickett, 1917-1921*, Digital Project, Governor Thomas W. Bickett Papers, <http://mosaicnc.org/document/2575>, accessed 23 October 2020; George J. Anderson, "Making the Camps Safe for the Army," *The Annals of the American Academy*

management of women and girls of lower classes by the middle-class and elite women who ran these activities. The Woman's Committee created an entire new division for social hygiene by the summer of 1918, managing the interactions of populations on or around three camps in the state. Activities addressing social hygiene were undertaken despite the existence of a national Commission on Training Camp Activities chartered to handle such issues.⁶⁸ Efforts toward social hygiene were encouraged by Governor Bickett and the Council of National Defense, but ultimately deemed the responsibility of women, who in the mind of the Governor and most of southern society were charged to tend to the morality of both their fellow women and the men at camp.⁶⁹ The area of health and recreation allowed for increased engagement and activism by the Woman's Committee, with support by the state Council of Defense. This was a non-threatening area to men because it was intimately tied to the southern ideal of women as the protectors of the family and girls' innocence, as well as the increasing role of women in the nascent profession of social services seen at the turn of the twentieth century.⁷⁰

The ability of Reilley and her Woman's Committee to manage and expand their activities in work for the preservation of the home – namely through food administration, food production,

of Political and Social Science 79, (Sep 1918), 151; Sarah McCulloh Lemmon, *North Carolina's Role in the First World War* (Raleigh, N.C.: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1975), 40; Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense*, 79-82.

⁶⁸ Reilley, *Report of the Woman's Committee of the North Carolina*; the Commission on Training Camp Activities was run by social reformer Raymond Fosdick on behalf of the War Department. It worked to ensure the physical and moral health of soldiers, eventually through the creation of the United War Work Campaign, which coordinated the various groups that supported such work, including the Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., Jewish Welfare Board, Knights of Columbus/National Catholic War Council, Salvation Army, American Library Association, and War Camp Community Service. Raymond B. Fosdick, "The Commission on Training Camp Activities," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science in the City of New York* 7, no. 4 (Feb 1918), 163-170; Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 57-81.

⁶⁹ Thomas W. Bickett, Speech to the North Carolina Conference for Social Service, Raleigh, N.C., 5 March 1918 and Speech to the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs, Raleigh, N.C., 30 May 1918, in House, *Public Letters and Papers of Thomas Walter Bickett*, 168.

⁷⁰ Schneider, *Into the Breach*, 265; Brownell, "The Women's Committees of the First World War," 11-12, 96-107; Wilkerson-Freeman, "Women and the Transformation of American Politics," ix.

and health and welfare – was greater than any other category of women’s work during the mobilization for the First World War. Success in this area was due to the natural overlap between previous conceptions of the role of women as managers and protectors of the home and family, buttressed by the patriarchal foundations of southern Progressivism, and the natural application of wartime “woman power” into these activities. These areas were also well-addressed by private woman’s groups even before the war, providing the Woman’s Committee an ample source of personnel and experience addressing these issues.

The second area in which women were engaged during the First World War was relief work. This area included activities that matched pre-war expectations of woman’s work, while also overlapping with political concerns managed by the state Council of Defense, causing some friction as the war progressed as women attempted to expand where they could employ their “woman power.” Each of these activities – including home and foreign relief, the maintenance of existing social service agencies, and child welfare – were enhanced by a burgeoning professionalism around social services occurring at the turn of the twentieth century, particularly at the state level.⁷¹

According to Reilley, home and foreign relief, or work dedicated to the care of the sick and wounded or the materiel to support their care, was “the war work which appeals more generally than any other line of war work” to the women of the North Carolina because they “can see the demand and supply and [it] gives opportunity for splendid service, where there is no

⁷¹ Roy Lubove, *The Professional Altruist: The Emergence of Social Work as a Career, 1880-1930* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 196); Clarke A. Chambers, “Women in the Creation of the Profession of Social Work,” *Social Service Review* 60, no. 1 (Mar 1986): 1-33; Ellen F. Fitzpatrick, *Endless Crusade: Women Social Scientists and Progressive Reform* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1990); Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion*; Regina G. Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work, 1890-1945* (New Haven, C.T.: Yale University Press, 1993); Wilkerson-Freeman, “Women and the Transformation of American Politics”; Kathleen Marie Scott, “Recipe for Citizenship: Professionalization and Power in World War I Dietetics,” PhD diss. (Williamsburg, V.A., College of William and Mary, 2009); Krome-Lukens, “The Reform Imagination.”

interest in economic lines of endeavor.”⁷² Such work included, according to the national Woman’s Committee, “preparing surgical dressings, collecting funds, knitting for sailors and soldiers, making comfort kits, assisting the families of men in military and naval service, and organizing courses for first aid and for home nursing.”⁷³ The Woman’s Committee played a coordinating and supportive role in this area, as the work was primarily executed by the American Red Cross, an organization which grew from minimal local support in North Carolina prior to the war to over 250,000 members in 140 chapters, 360 branches, and 250 auxiliaries by 1918.⁷⁴ The preference for the Red Cross in the area of relief began at the beginning of mobilization, with Governor Bickett recommending that any wartime work conducted by women should be done by the state chapter of the Red Cross, which existed exactly for this purpose.⁷⁵ The national Woman’s Committee’s creation of a state entity and the naming of Reilley as the chair superseded Bickett’s original intention, however.

⁷² Reilley, *Report of the Woman's Committee of the North Carolina*; Reilley to Shaw, 15 June 1917, Box 468, File 132, RG 62, NARA.

⁷³ Woman’s Committee of the Council of National Defense, *Report Covering a Year’s Activities up to April 21, 1918* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918), 42; Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 83-86.

⁷⁴ Lemmon, *North Carolina’s Role in the First World War*, 39; Breen, “Southern Women in the War,” 258. Recent books on the Red Cross and its role in humanitarian relief and the First World War include Clemens, *Civic Gifts*, 112-158, Irwin, *Making the World Safe*, 72-102, and Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense*, 94-99. Details of the prolific work done by the Red Cross in the state can be found in their reports, usually compiled at the county level, many of which can be found in the State Archives of North Carolina under the World War I Papers, Military Collection, <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/search/collection/p15012coll10!p16062coll11/search/searchterm/red%20cross%20history>, accessed 25 October 2020. A good example is Mrs. W.C.A. Hammel, *Greensboro, N.C., Chapter of the American Red Cross in the World War* (Greensboro, N.C.: American Red Cross, Greensboro Chapter, 1919), <http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/ref/collection/GoodMed/id/23355>, accessed 8 Feb 2022. The Red Cross was also an organization that drew support from Black women, who provided similar, if segregated, work. National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs, “Minutes of the Eleventh Biennial Convention of the National Association of Colored Women, 1918,” in Williams, *Records of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs*, 24-28.

⁷⁵ Bickett to Reilley, 18 May 1917, Box 468, File 132, RG 62 NARA; Brownell, “The Women’s Committees of the First World War,” 36-37; Kathelene McCarty Smith and Keith Phelan Gorman, “The Call to Duty in the Old North State: Patriotism, Service, and North Carolina Women’s Colleges during the Great War,” in Matthew L. Downs and M. Ryan Floyd, eds., *The American South and the Great War, 1914-1924* (Baton Rouge, L.A.: Louisiana State University Press, 2018), 135n15.

Because the Red Cross was already well-established, Reilley and the women on her committee sometimes struggled to understand their role and were consistently concerned their personnel were not getting the credit they deserved when it came to relief activities.⁷⁶ To overcome this, Reilley coordinated a division of labor that focused on mobilizing personnel for relief, thereby funneling volunteers to local Red Cross chapters. She also coordinated space for work, including the use of the brand new North Carolina Federation of Woman's Clubs Clubhouse in Raleigh as a Red Cross Center.⁷⁷ Yet, despite interorganizational friction between the Woman's Committee and the Red Cross, the work these two organizations were jointly undertaking fell within the female dominion.⁷⁸ For that reason, and like the work of preserving the home, they received significant support from political leadership in the state, and the Council of Defense in particular.⁷⁹ A long-standing associational relationship between the Red Cross and other relief organizations with both federal and state governments also reduced friction in this area of work.

The Woman's Committee also oversaw the maintenance of existing social service agencies, which was designed to "further the activities of existing agencies for relief," according to sociologist Elisabeth Carey, writing at the end of the war.⁸⁰ After a robust expansion of public services under Governor Bickett in 1916 and early 1917, there was a desire by Progressive reformers in the state, including Reilley and the members on the Woman's Committee, to ensure

⁷⁶ Lemmon, *North Carolina's Role in the First World War*, 39; Breen, "Southern Women in the War," 258.

⁷⁷ Cotten, *History of the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs*, 119; "American Red Cross," Boxes 2-5, Military Collection, WWI 6; Box 18, Military Collection, WWI Private Collections, Elizabeth Earl Jones, May F. Jones Papers, State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.; various images of material culture from the City of Raleigh Museum Collection, provided by Ainsley Powell, Curator of Collections, City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department, Raleigh, N.C.

⁷⁸ Brownell, "The Women's Committees of the First World War," 36-37, *Daughters of the American Revolution Craighead-Dunlap Chapter, Anson County in the World War* (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards & Broughton Company, 1929), 329-357.

⁷⁹ North Carolina Council of Defense, *First Annual Report* (Raleigh, N.C.: Commercial Printing Company, 1918), 12, 18.

⁸⁰ Elisabeth Carey, "Department of Home and Foreign Relief of the Woman's Committee," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 79 (Sep 1918): 234.

continued support of families in need of food, housing, or mental health care.⁸¹ Additionally, with the outbreak of war there was no shortage of charities and causes in need of monetary support. The Woman's Committee diligently worked to convince the citizens of the state that "social service is war service," as Anna Shaw wrote, and that they should continue supporting pre-war charities that needed their help.⁸² Some women contested the insistence that they participate in the war effort or that they should be required to donate time or money to charities. However, most women in the state were supportive of existing social services, both private and public, seeing them as a natural area for the employment of "woman power." Women running mobilization in the state also saw social service work as a tool to expand women's roles in professional work, long viewed as a path for middle-class and elite women to increase their impact on state and national politics.

As the Council of Defense and the Woman's Committee developed guidance on wartime causes worth investing, none more crucial than the Red Cross and government loan and bond drives, women in the state canvassed their neighborhoods on behalf of financing the war and necessary social services in the state.⁸³ However, the ability of Reilly and the other members of the Woman's Committee to have any impact was largely contingent on their relationships with the men in control of the welfare bureaucracies of the state and social service organizations like the Red Cross.⁸⁴ Devoid of women leaders in social service, despite the expanding number of women in this increasingly professionalized sector, the challenges the Woman's Committee experienced in this area demonstrated women's continued "unfixed status" and the "continued

⁸¹ Krome-Lukens, "The Reform Imagination," 173.

⁸² Anna Howard Shaw, "The Woman's Committee of the United States Council of National Defense," *Ladies' Home Journal* 34, no. 8 (Aug 1917).

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Brownell, "The Women's Committees of the First World War," 36-37; Hulse, *Granville County in the World War*, 165-177.

necessity for women of cultivating relationships with men with access to political power,”⁸⁵ to quote historian Anna Krome-Lukens.

Child welfare became a surprisingly contested issue during mobilization. The issue fell firmly within the female dominion; however, children also had a role in the state economy, and efforts to limit child labor produced conflicts between levels of government. Many states, particularly southern states that opposed such limiting measures, consistently fought the federal government, which attempted to place limits upon child labor. When it came to Progressives in North Carolina, including Governor Bickett and the men running the Council of Defense, the idea of federal government intervention into the free market was acceptable as far as it protected their agrarian and textiles-based economy. However, they also believed that, in the words of historian William Breen, “the government’s role did not extend to social problems” such as poverty or child labor, let alone race relations.⁸⁶ Such sentiments were especially true for businessmen in textiles and mills who were accustomed to independence in their labor practices, including the use of child laborers, and they resented any intrusion into how they managed their workers.⁸⁷

Many woman’s groups focused upon child welfare and education supported limitations on the employment of children. Having diligently worked on this issue for years before the war, child welfare was a key action for Reilley.⁸⁸ She pushed strenuously for child welfare measures, including a limit to underage labor in the state.⁸⁹ Her efforts were continually stymied, however, despite the repeated requests for support sent to Governor Bickett and the state Council of

⁸⁵ Krome-Lukens, “The Reform Imagination,” 138.

⁸⁶ Breen, “Southern Women in the War,” 274-275; Krome-Lukens, “The Reform Imagination,” 143.

⁸⁷ Shipman to Bickett, 19 Feb 1917, Folder 2, G.P. 369; George Brown Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945* (Baton Rouge, L.A.: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), 5-7; William A. Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, et al., *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (New York, N.Y.: Norton, 1987), 56-60, 114-140.

⁸⁸ Wilkerson-Freeman, “Women and the Transformation of American Politics,” 233-234.

⁸⁹ Reilley, *Report of the Woman's Committee of the North Carolina*.

Defense.⁹⁰ The lack of support became pronounced after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the Federal Child Labor Law as unconstitutional in 1918.⁹¹ Because this area of concern overlapped with men's economic interests and their war work, it put women at a disadvantage. Once again, the bifurcation of work and women's "unfixed status" denied them the political power to address underage labor, and they were unable to find an ally in the associational wartime state to take up their cause given the economic and political pressures.

According to historian Angela Robbins, aside from the issue of child labor, "assisting in the uplift of the poor, the disadvantaged, and the vulnerable," most especially children, "were among those Progressive reform activities deemed most appropriate for women giving their presumed innate abilities for nurturing."⁹² Most reformers recognized the general benefits of ensuring a healthy population, including economic, social, and even moral benefits. There were also military justifications reformers could invoke during the wartime emergency. Throughout the war there was a relatively high rate of medical rejections of draftees from southern states.⁹³ High medical rejections legitimated a focus on determining the health of its children, as well as developing measures to improve it. The Woman's Committee and its members energetically pursued such tasks, including the weighing, measuring, and registering of young children in the state to ensure they were getting enough sustenance and exercise; the development and funding of recreational activities for children; and working to ensure there were enough teachers for schools despite the conscription of many men who were instructors, including the identification and

⁹⁰ U.S. Woman's Committee, General Letter No. 109, 8 Jul 1918, Folder 1, Box 30, WWI 1; Frederick Lewis Allen, *The Council of Defense System: A History Submitted to the Director of the Council of National Defense* (Washington, D.C.: Council of National Defense, 1919), p. 258, unpublished, Box 1053, RG 62, NARA; Breen, "Southern Women in the War," 271-272; Wilkerson-Freeman, "Women and the Transformation of American Politics," 304.

⁹¹ Reilly, "Future Work Plan."

⁹² Robbins, "'Doing Their Big Bit,'" 251.

⁹³ G. St. J. Perrott, "Selective Service Rejection Statistics and Some of Their Implications," *American Journal of Public Health* 36 (April 1946): 340-342.

employment of more women in education.⁹⁴ These efforts were nationally organized, but state-executed, as a part of a coordinated “Children’s Year” from 1918-1919.⁹⁵

Relief work remained one of the most effective and desired aspects of woman’s work throughout the war, although it generated pushback by political leaders, particularly when their work overlapped with men’s control of the economy or their leadership of state social welfare programs. Where the Woman’s Committee worked within the traditional female dominion involving the family and home, however, they were able to make an argument for the employment of “woman power,” manage themselves, and generate support from the people of North Carolina, men and women.⁹⁶

The Woman’s Committee in North Carolina was largely excluded from and had the least impact in areas where the work directly tied to either the relations between the state and the federal government, or in areas that threatened to expand the role of women outside the traditional female dominion. These more contested areas threatened existing hierarchies of political and economic power within North Carolina and were less susceptible to the associational aspects of the Committee’s coordination of mobilization activities. Such areas included work focused on publicity and educational propaganda, registering women for service, the raising of Liberty Loans and war bonds to fund the war, and women in industry.

A fundamental role of the Woman’s Committee was simply communicating with the women of North Carolina and making the case for where and how “woman power” should be employed in the state. Reilley did much of this work herself, spending her time writing press releases to newspapers, giving speeches, and corresponding with leading women in the state. By 1918, many of the key themes and ideas she communicated came from the national Woman’s

⁹⁴ Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense*, 73-76.

⁹⁵ Pratt, “History of the North Carolina Council of Defense,” 112.

⁹⁶ Carraway, *Carolina Crusaders*.

Committee through their bulletins, circulars, and pamphlets. The state Woman's Committee was originally envisioned as a mechanism to create a direct channel of communication from federal agencies to women at a local level and communicate local concerns back to the state and federal government. However, official communications and publicity became a method of creating boundaries around speech in the state, according to Emily Blair, encouraging "purposeful loyalty" that included the need to provide "prompt conformity to Governmental requests," the "forbearance of criticism," and requirement to report "anti-American sentiment."⁹⁷ Where the Woman's Committee was able to provide this capability, they were integrated and supported by the men's Council.

Another area in which the Woman's Committee failed to gain ground during the war was the registering of women for service, the core element of harnessing "woman power." Established as a way to identify and categorize the abilities and desires of women to support the mobilization, the registration had limited success, with Reilley reporting in 1918 that "Of the 641,666 women in the state" only "11,358 women have registered for service to date."⁹⁸ This lack of support concerned Woman's Committees at all levels, given the concomitant and wildly successful registrations of men for military service.⁹⁹ Such lack of a voluntary spirit was seen as a failing of not just those serving on the Woman's Committee, but all women, because, according to Dr. Shaw, "No able-bodied woman has a right to occupy space in our land who is not doing, or

⁹⁷ Blair, *An Interpretive Report*, 33; Council of National Defense, Committee on Women's Defense Work, Notes from the National Meeting in Washington, D.C., 14 May 1918, p. 210, M-1074, Book III, RG 62, NARA; Pratt, "History of the North Carolina Council of Defense," 44-45; Lemmon, *North Carolina's Role in the First World War*, 32. This included direct targeting at women to "do your part and in the doing you will bind yourself to the whole army of women," and educate fellow women for the purposes of "constructive patriotism" that included using their moral influence to ensure men registered for the draft. Anna Howard Shaw, "The Woman's Committee of the United States Council of National Defense," *Ladies' Home Journal* 34, no. 9 (Sep 1917); Anna Howard Shaw, "The Woman's Committee of the United States Council of National Defense," *Ladies' Home Journal* 35, no. 2 (Feb 1918).

⁹⁸ Reilley, *Report of the Woman's Committee of North Carolina*; Henderson, "North Carolina Women in the World War," 2. Frederick Allen of the Council of National Defense also saw women's registration in the Carolinas as a failure. See Allen, *The Council of Defense System*, 83-84.

⁹⁹ Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense*, 64-68.

preparing to do, some active service for the right to occupy the space she fills.”¹⁰⁰ Women in the state, particularly those without the social and political support found in the middle- and upper-classes, were concerned that if they registered it would either take them away from their families or affect the status of their husbands and lead to their conscription into the military.¹⁰¹

The final area in which the Woman’s Committee was most constrained in their activities was their work relating to the federal government or working outside the home. These two areas, typified by the Liberty Loan drives and women’s employment in industry, respectively, were largely taken out of the hands of the Woman’s Committee, coordinated by the state Council of Defense, and ultimately managed by federal agencies.¹⁰² In the case of Liberty Bonds, the Treasury Department created their own administrative structure to solicit participation in the three drives conducted during the war, enlisting the state Councils to provide the leadership and volunteer manpower to conduct the campaigns. As discussed in the previous chapter, the men on the Council took great pains to raise funds for the war. This pushed aside the Woman’s Committee while still using their connections in North Carolina to mobilize support on the ground.¹⁰³ However, while white women felt circumvented by this approach, Black women were able to organize themselves to have a sizeable impact by selling War Savings Stamps among African Americans in the state, even integrating into county-wide efforts by white citizens to raise money for the war.¹⁰⁴ As in many endeavors – from the support of soldiers at camp to food conservation and production – the Council’s neglect of the Black communities in their state,

¹⁰⁰ Anna Howard Shaw, “The Woman’s Committee of the United States Council of National Defense,” *Ladies’ Home Journal* 35, no. 4 (Apr 1918).

¹⁰¹ Anna Howard Shaw, “The Woman’s Committee of the United States Council of National Defense,” *Ladies’ Home Journal* 34, no. 12 (Dec 1917).

¹⁰² Reilly, *Report of the Woman’s Committee of the North Carolina*.

¹⁰³ Breen, “Southern Women in the War,” 258-259.

¹⁰⁴ “Negro Women Urged to Help in War Campaign,” *Daily News*, Greensboro, N.C., 11 Nov 1918, Folder “1918 News Clippings, Nov-Dec,” Group I, Series C, Box 377, NAACP Papers; Dunbar-Nelson, “Negro Women in War Work,” 391; Steinson, *American Women’s Activism*, 340-343; Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 196.

while excluding them from participation in Council decisions and direction, did not prevent them from participating in and conducting mobilization activities, as long as those activities were not seen as threatening to the state's socio-political order.

Women in industry received the least support from the state Council of Defense. The issue of women's factory work was highly contentious from the very foundation of the Woman's Committee.¹⁰⁵ At the federal level, the Department of Labor requested the national Woman's Committee refrain from formally establishing a division focused on woman's labor.¹⁰⁶ Instead, the Department created a separate organization led by men, the Women in Industry Service, that set policy in coordination with the War Labor Policies Board, another emergency wartime organization run by men.¹⁰⁷ The centralization of women in industry by the Labor Department negated any real impact the Woman's Committee might have been able to achieve in the area of working women. Instead, the Committee's Women in Industry Division ended up as a mere publicity agency, interpreting and communicating Labor Department policies to the state Woman's Committees. In North Carolina, the inability of Reilley to get approval by the state Council of Defense for her preferred candidate to manage the division of women in industry led to virtually no work being done in this area, at least among white women.¹⁰⁸ Reilley continued to advocate up until the end of the war for support from the Council of Defense, emphasizing the increasing importance of women in industry. Unfortunately, the need to enact standards to protect

¹⁰⁵ Maurine Greenwald, *Women, War, and Work: The Impact of World War One on Women Workers in the United States* (Westport, C.T.: Greenwood Press, 1980); Brownell, "The Women's Committees of the First World War," 107.

¹⁰⁶ Laura Holmes Reilley, "Report, Woman's Committee Council of National Defense," 21 Sep 1917, p. 2, Folder 7, Box 17, WWI 1; Laura Holmes Reilley, "Final Report, Woman's Committee Council of National Defense North Carolina Division," p. 10, unpublished, Folder 8, Box 17, WWI 1.

¹⁰⁷ Blair, *An Interpretive Report*, 83-84.

¹⁰⁸ Breen, "Southern Women in the War," 266-268; Laura Holmes Reilley, "Report, Woman's Committee Council of National Defense," p. 2, 21 Sep 1917, Folder 7, Box 17, WWI 1; Reilley, "Final Report," p. 10, unpublished, Folder 8, Box 17, WWI 1.

women and manage the continued effect of men leaving for military service and women taking up their jobs remained unaddressed by the Council as a whole.¹⁰⁹

Black women, however, were able to push for better housing and recreation, if not improved pay and hours through the Y.W.C.A., which supported urban and industrial woman workers even before the war.¹¹⁰ Success in improving housing and recreation came from the racial segregation of work in the South, with white employers leaving the responsibility of non-work hours to African Americans themselves. Because of this, advocates for better conditions for Black women in industry, including Charlotte Hawkins Brown, an educator and leading Black activist in North Carolina, were able to carve out areas of improvement, such as supporting women newly hired into factories who were “working under new conditions and [a] strange environment...They must be comfortably housed, and given recreation, sympathy and comfort.”¹¹¹ Working with other Black women in the state, Brown raised money for the Y.W.C.A. that could be used to uplift Black women, from those working in industrial factories, to basic social work for young girls, Red Cross workers, and even the women supporting food conservation through canning at the local level.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Reilley, “Future Work Plan”; Janet F. Davidson, “Women and the Railroad: The Gendering of Work During the First World War, 1917-1920,” PhD diss. (Newark, D.E., University of Delaware, 1999), 15.

¹¹⁰ The Y.W.C.A. was an organization that included Black women into wartime activities, allowing the creation of branches for African American women, as long as they were chartered and overseen by an existing “central” (white) branch. Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 192. A key Y.W.C.A. member in North Carolina was Governor Bickett’s wife, Fanny Yarborough Bickett, who served as an honorary chair of the North Carolina Woman’s Committee and was supportive of interracial cooperation, if on the terms of white women and not endangering white supremacy in the state. Linda K. Kerber, ed., *Women’s America: Refocusing the Past*, 8th ed. (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2016), 307; Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 201-202, 210-218.

¹¹¹ Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense*, 47; Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 193; Williams, *Records of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs*.

¹¹² Hill to Reilley, 2 Aug 1917, Folder 7, Box 17, WWI 1; U.S. Council of National Defense, 8 Oct 1918, General Letter No. 4, “Negro Organization,” Folder 11, Box 28, WWI 1; “Colored People of Wilmington Held Enthusiastic Meeting Last Night,” *The Morning Star*, 15 May 1918, Folder 7, Box 10, WWI 2; Daughters of the American Revolution, *Anson County in the World War*, 343; Hulse, *Granville County in the World War*, 209; “Negro Women Urged to Help in War Campaign,” *Daily News* (Greensboro, N.C.), 11 Nov 1918, Folder “1918 News Clippings, Nov-Dec,” Group I, Series C, Box 377, NAACP Papers;

Conclusion

In September 1918, the national Woman's Committee merged with the State Councils Section of the Council of National Defense to streamline the management of and communications with the separate elements of state councils run by men and women. Some, such as Emily Blair, viewed this amalgamation as "a sign that the Government at Washington recognized the importance of women's war work and realized that the amalgamation was a great step in the partnership of men and women."¹¹³ The new Field Division this amalgamation created had equal representation of men and women within the organization, though the women representatives were subordinate to their male counterparts.¹¹⁴ It was hoped such an amalgamation would not only increase efficiency between the coordination of men's and women's work, but bring to fruition the aspiration of "woman power" as an equal to manpower. The end of the war in November ultimately dashed such hopes.

Governor Bickett and the men on the North Carolina Council, similar to the delayed creation of a Council of Defense and their Woman's Committee at the beginning of the war, dragged their feet and did not institute a similar amalgamation of work across the gender gap. When the United States signed an armistice with Germany on 11 November 1918, the state Council of Defense and the Woman's Committee halted their activities. Except for the final collecting of documents and the completion of final reports, both organizations dissolved.

Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense*, 47; Nina Mjagkij, *Light in the Darkness: African Americans and the Y.M.C.A., 1852-1946* (Lexington, K.Y.: University Press of Kentucky, 1994).

¹¹³ Blair, *An Interpretive Report*, 128.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 123.

The alacrity with which North Carolina dispensed with these mechanisms for mobilization was hardly surprising. It reflected their purpose as temporary measures to manage the dynamics of wartime inclusion and exclusion and maintain pre-war hierarchies of power. Throughout the war, the bifurcation of work based on gender and the “unfixed status” of women in southern states created a situation in which women’s mobilization for war required constant negotiation, leading to a diminution of “woman power” by selective inclusion in state activities in some areas, and exclusion in others. In areas regarding the home and the family, the traditional female dominion, the Woman’s Committee of the Council of Defense was able to lead their own work and have an impact. Reilley and the other women of the Woman’s Committee were able to create an organization that permeated the entire state at multiple levels and mobilize a body of women to address food conservation and production, social hygiene and relief work, and in the selling of Liberty Bonds.¹¹⁵ As the men of the national and state Councils primarily saw the Woman’s Committees as a way to channel woman’s war work in the proper direction while preventing challenges to the existing socio-political order, the performances of women in these areas were also seen by them as a success.¹¹⁶

In areas that overlapped with concerns of men, the Woman’s Committee had to negotiate their ability to mobilize and organize the women of the state through building relationships and coalitions with men, though throughout the war they were largely excluded from these activities.¹¹⁷ Most emblematic of these areas were those that contested political or economic power, such as child welfare, war financing, and women in industry. Some federal officials, such as historian and member of the Council of National Defense, Frederick Allen, felt the inability of women to gain traction in these areas meant the North Carolina Woman’s Committee failed to

¹¹⁵ Reilley, “Final Report,” pp. 3-7, unpublished, Folder 8, Box 17, WWI 1.

¹¹⁶ Steinson, *American Women’s Activism*, 346.

¹¹⁷ Krome-Lukens, “The Reform Imagination,” 29.

increase the capability of the state through its “woman power” because it was “weak in organization and accomplished little.”¹¹⁸ Allen continued, stating that such failure was due to the general poverty of the South, and, more accurately, “The condescension with which women were regarded by their political and economic masters, the men.”¹¹⁹ Unlike federal officials, in the eyes of the men on the North Carolina Council of Defense the failures of the Woman’s Committee to promote women’s activism outside of the female dominion reflected the priorities of the men on the state Council of Defense, who were invested in the defense of pre-war social order and gender and racial hierarchies. To these men, both the successes and the failures of women in North Carolina were a success for the state Council, as it led to the continuation of pre-war norms.

¹¹⁸ Allen, *The Council of Defense System*, 273

¹¹⁹ Allen, *The Council of Defense System*, 271.

Chapter 5:

“Unalterable Determination”: The Exclusion of African Americans from War Work¹

Speaking to attendees of the November 1917 Johnston County Negro Fair, educator and newspaper editor Charles N. Hunter rallied his fellow African Americans to support North Carolina’s war effort.² He pushed his listeners to put aside the domestic oppression Black Americans experienced to serve the larger purpose of the “war to save democracy.” According to Hunter, “men are moving for freedom” and Black Americans should join the historic events, which would help solve their domestic issues.³ His support for war, and his belief in the promise it held to reshape race relations and improve the lives of Black Americans, were not unique. African American leaders of disparate views supported America’s war effort, from Booker T. Washington’s proteges of the Tuskegee Institute like Emmett Scott, then serving as a special adviser to Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, to the sociologist and founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), W.E.B. Du Bois. By varying degrees, these men believed that by supporting the war effort Black Americans would be provided increased safety, respect, and citizenship rights which the national and state governments, particularly those of the former Confederate States, had denied them since the end

¹ Thomas Bickett, “Negro Emigration,” *Raleigh News and Observer*, 4 August 1919, in Sanford Martin and R.B. House, eds., *Public Letters and Papers of Thomas Walter Bickett, Governor of North Carolina, 1917-1921* (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1923), 291-292.

² For more on Hunter and how he can be seen to encapsulate race relations and Black history in the South at the turn of the twentieth century, see John Haley, *Charles N. Hunter and Race Relations in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1987).

³ Charles N. Hunter, “The Negro’s Call to World Service, an Address Delivered at the Johnston County Negro Fair, 15 Nov 1917,” Charles N. Hunter Papers, 1850s-1932, Rubenstein Special Collections, Duke University, Durham, N.C. (hereafter Hunter Papers).

of Reconstruction a half-century earlier.⁴ Support by national Black leaders did not mean that there was widespread agreement in North Carolina's Black communities or that white men and women in the state were entirely in favor of integrating African Americans into the war effort. Instead, as historian Adriane Lentz-Smith has argued, "the war supplied a new theater for Americans to wage all the battles over nation and state, color and access, power and rights."⁵

In North Carolina, the home front in this new theater was dominated by the state Council of Defense. It used its role as a coordinating mechanism between non-governmental groups and state and local governments to ensure the continued dominance of the white supremacist order. The state Council of Defense also used its intermediary role between the state and the national government to inhibit any federal desires to integrate African Americans more fully into the wartime mobilization. Where the national Council viewed the integration of Black Americans into wartime activities as crucial to increase the capability of the nation to mobilize for war, the state Council only saw the possibility of social and political breakdown. The North Carolina Council of Defense excluded Black citizens from state level mobilization activities at the beginning of the war, and it only gave limited ground later by allowing local and county Councils of Defense to employ African Americans to act as spokesmen to Black communities as a salve over continued pressure from federal agencies.

⁴ For more on African American support for the war as a way to gain greater citizenship rights, see Adriane Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 2011), 4-5; Chad Louis Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in World War I Era* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 3-5; Mark Ellis, *Race, War, and Surveillance: African Americans and the United States Government during World War I* (Bloomington, I.N.: Indiana University Press, 2001), 231. Not all African Americans supported the war. Theodore Kornweibel details four different groupings that ran the spectrum from support to apathy to antipathy to ignorance: Theodore Kornweibel, "Apathy and Dissent: Black America's Negative Responses to World War I," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 80, no. 3 (Summer 1981): 322-338. And while many Black North Carolinians likely fit into the latter three categories, the state Council of Defense was largely happy with those who were apathetic or ignorant, while they tried to channel supporters and detractors into what they considered "appropriate" activities while preventing any kind of organization of African Americans in the state.

⁵ Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles*, 208.

The inclusion of Black men and women as token information conduits was a common tactic employed by white leaders in North Carolina and across the nation.⁶ It allowed white leaders to control which African Americans were allowed to participate in mobilization activities, created distance between white leaders and Black communities, and provided a mechanism to share crucial information with African Americans without enabling any collective action on their part that could threaten the existing order. The employment of Black speakers nonetheless created new opportunities for African Americans, as men like Hunter, Scott, Du Bois, and many others used their positions as intermediaries between white elites and local Black communities to advance the interests and the overall position of African Americans.⁷ These efforts eventually carved out specific areas in which Black North Carolinians were able to participate in mobilization to varying degrees, including as spokesmen for the local and county councils, as soldiers and those supporting the military mobilization, and as participants in resource management as it related to food, labor, and fundraising.

This chapter analyzes the ways in which the North Carolina Council of Defense engaged in a politics of racial inclusion and exclusion to maintain pre-war social and political control over African Americans in the mobilization for the First World War. Forcibly prevented from full and active participation in the civic life of North Carolina, African Americans in the state experienced continuing exclusion from the organization of mobilization activities during the war. This politics of exclusion reduced the ability of African Americans to participate fully in wartime activities, thereby imposing limits on the overall capability of the state to support national requirements. The exclusion of African Americans from participating in mobilization evolved over time to

⁶ David P. Kilroy, *For Race and Country: The Life and Career of Colonel Charles Young* (Westport, C.T.: Praeger, 2003), xi; William J. Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home: Civilian Mobilization, Wartime Federalism, and the Council of National Defense, 1917-1919* (Westport, C.T.: Greenwood Press, 1984), 110, 235fn35; Ellis, *Race, War, and Surveillance*, xii.

⁷ Haley, *Charles N. Hunter*, viii-xi.

allow some inclusion at the local, and in some cases county, level. Yet, ultimately, African Americans remained excluded from all but token inclusion in state Council activities. In the end, the white elites overseeing North Carolina's mobilization for war willfully accepted a loss of mobilizing capability as they strove to maintain pre-war social and political structures of power. They could afford to do so because North Carolina remained capable of meeting the wartime mobilization requirements and resource demands of the nation without including them to their potential.

This chapter argues that the politics of racial exclusion employed by the North Carolina Council of Defense bounded the ability of African Americans to participate in the state's mobilization for the First World War. The white elites who led the state Council of Defense were products of, and stakeholders in, the patriarchal, white-supremacist socio-political order of North Carolina. While many, including Governor Thomas Bickett, were more Progressive than past state leaders on many issues affecting African Americans, they fundamentally believed in a state that was socially and politically dominated by white men. These beliefs shaped how the state Council structured itself and coordinated activities during the war. Unlike white women, Black citizens in North Carolina were not provided opportunities for inclusion on the state Council of Defense. Continuing state efforts to prevent the organization and mobilization of African Americans, the elites managing the war effort relied upon the infrequent and instrumental use of select Black men as token representatives to act as conduits of information to African American communities, but nothing more. Such constraints on state-level activities did not mean African Americans did not participate in mobilization activities or were not asked (and at times, coerced) to perform specific tasks on behalf of the state, it just meant they were excluded from the management of mobilization itself.

In engaging in its racial politics of inclusion and exclusion, the North Carolina Council of Defense fought off any federal desires for African American inclusion articulated by the Council of National Defense that went contrary to state elite interests. Refusing to include Black citizens in the mobilization apparatus, the state Council was able to maintain state sovereignty on a signature issue important to state elites, as well as prevent any challenges to the state's socio-political order during the relative instability of a wartime mobilization.

This chapter begins by exploring the racial context in which Black North Carolinians worked during the war, and its impact on the way the state Council structured the exclusion of African Americans from the mobilization of the state. The chapter then analyzes the areas in which Black citizens in the state were nonetheless able to carve out areas to support select mobilization activities, despite the exclusionary approach of state leaders. Such areas were primarily those already associated with African American life and viewed as non-threatening to white citizens, such as agriculture or tending to their own communities, including support to Black soldiers and home relief. However, the Council maintained a strict policy preventing Black inclusion and organization at the state level, despite federal intervention at multiple points during the war. The resultant relative decrease in overall mobilization capability such politics of inclusion and exclusion created was, in the estimation of white leaders in the state, worth the cost to ensure the North Carolina Council of Defense could retain control of Black communities in the state.

Racial Foundations of Mobilization

Where and how Black citizens of North Carolina interacted with mobilization was dependent on the white supremacist foundation of political, economic, and social life in early twentieth century North Carolina. Politically, white supremacy held together the white majority in

the state by providing an alternative to the Republican and Populist parties that brought multiracial governance at the end of the nineteenth century – an occurrence that was forcibly eradicated in places like Wilmington and then backed by amendments to the state constitution that stripped African Americans of their right to vote or hold office.⁸ In this way, as historian Stephen Kantrowitz has shown, white supremacy was “more than a slogan and less than a fact,” working as “a social argument and a political program. It consisted of ideas and practices, promises and threats” that could “identify and attack the figures who seemed to pose the greatest threat” to the culture and identity of white North Carolinians – namely, Black citizens who could challenge and replace them through the acquisition of economic and political power.⁹ The only prevention of this threat, according to white elites, was to retain Democratic Party dominance of local and state government through the political organization of white voters and the prevention of voting by Black citizens via the imposition of a strict, violent social and political hierarchy.¹⁰

Economically, North Carolina depended to a large degree on the cheap labor of African Americans, from men and women working cash crop farms to Black women performing domestic work in white homes. While Black men and women had much in common with poor whites in the state, which led to the successes of the multiracial coalitions in the late nineteenth century, white supremacists were able to weaken class solidarity through fear, violence, and appeals to race pride that played on economic concerns.¹¹ Such racial politics led to policies that rooted Black labor in the farms they had worked back into the days of slavery, as well as threatening the use of Black labor to break strikes in industrial jobs. Such practices thereby reduced the price of white

⁸ Oliver Cromwell Cox, *Capitalism and American Leadership* (New York, N.Y.: Philosophical Library, 1962), 242-246.

⁹ Stephen David Kantrowitz, *Ben Tillman & the Reconstruction of White Supremacy* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 2, 7.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 312n2.

¹¹ Melvin M. Leiman, *Political Economy of Racism* (London, U.K.: Pluto Press, 1993), 3-11, 66; David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York, N.Y.: Verso, 2007).

labor and stoked racial tension.¹² Such economic fears based in race only grew as Black men and women left the state in search of better paying jobs in the North and the prospect of less oppressive lives.¹³ The flight from the South led to severe labor shortages in North Carolina, resulting in eighty-seven of the state's one hundred counties reporting labor shortages even before the United States entered the war.¹⁴ Fears over the economic costs of outward migration by the state's most significant agricultural labor pool, as well as a perceived loss of control over Black men and women, led to significant consternation by North Carolina's white elite. Black men and women in the state recognized the increasing fear of white citizens, with T.L. McCoy, secretary of the Raleigh Branch of the NAACP, commenting in 1918 to the organization's national office that, "War conditions have made the white people in the southern states very sensitive [sic] to every Negro movement."¹⁵

The movement of Black men and women around the state and the country, in addition to the perceived dangers of drafting and training Black men in the military arts and the increased opportunities for economic improvement, also threatened the social hierarchy of white supremacy in North Carolina. Long sold as a moderate state with amicable racial harmony, the war and its effects created uncertainty for both Black and white North Carolinians.¹⁶ This uncertainty was seen as an opportunity for many African Americans, who pushed for increased participation in

¹² The scarcity of labor, and particularly agricultural labor, allowed Black citizens more power to achieve changes through strikes and other collective measures. However, this came at a cost of increasing racial animosity. David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 379.

¹³ Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (New York, N.Y.: Random House, 2010); Arthur E. Barbeau and Florette Henri, *The Unknown Soldiers: Black American Troops in World War I* (Philadelphia, P.A.: Temple University Press, 1974), 9.

¹⁴ Jeffrey J. Crow, Paul D. Escott, and Flora J. H. Wadlington, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina* (Raleigh, N.C.: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1992), 132.

¹⁵ McCoy to Shillady, 20 May 1918, Folder 36, Group I, Series G, Box 148 (N.C. Branch Files), NAACP Papers.

¹⁶ Shepard to Bickett, 4 Jul 1917, Folder 2, G.P. 370; Bickett to Shepard, 7 Jul 1917, Folder 2, G.P. 370.

the war and its mobilization.¹⁷ But the same uncertainty had the opposite effect on many of their white neighbors, who feared the the breakdown of social hierarchy, and led to desires for increased control, whether by law, such as the imposition of vagrancy laws that disproportionately were employed against African Americans, or through terroristic, vigilante violence seen in lynching.¹⁸ Long a tactic of social control, lynching and other violence became a key tool for maintaining the extant socio-political order in the state.¹⁹ Unfortunately, by the First World War, “generations of Americans came to see white-supremacist violence not as a tactic but as a fact of social life, almost a force of nature,”²⁰ to quote Kantrowitz.

Some citizens and organizations within the state did attempt to prevent such violence. The NAACP, for example, found its purpose in combatting lynching around the country.²¹ Another champion against race-based violence was Governor Thomas Bickett. Both in his previous role as the state Attorney General and as the state’s executive leadership throughout the war, Bickett worked to calm racial tension in the state and combat extrajudicial killing, but he did so as a white supremacist and true-blue southern Democrat who believed in the inferiority of African Americans. As a trained lawyer, and a white southerner without the lived experience of the way the law disadvantaged Black citizens in the state, he trusted that the law would better

¹⁷ Theodore Kornweibel, *No Crystal Stair: Black Life and the Messenger, 1917-1928* (Westport, C.T.: Greenwood Press, 1975), xi-xiii.

¹⁸ On vagrancy, see Beasley to Bickett, 19 Apr 1917, Folder 2, Box 1, WWI 8; Dunn to Bickett, 26 Apr 1917, Folder 3, Box 1, WWI 8; Dunn to Food Conservation Commission, 27 Apr 1917, Folder 3, Box 1, WWI 8; Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 107. On lynching, see Crow, et al, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina*, 110; Ellis, *Race, War, and Surveillance*, xiii; Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy*, 17; Charles David Phillips, “Exploring Relations among Forms of Social Control: The Lynching and Execution of Blacks in North Carolina, 1889-1918,” *Law & Society Review* 21, no. 3 (1987): 361–74.

¹⁹ Phillips, “Exploring Relations among Forms of Social Control,” 365.

²⁰ Kantrowitz, *Ben Tillman*, 9.

²¹ There were seven NAACP chapters in North Carolina by early 1919. List of North Carolina Chapter Leadership, 10 Feb 1919, Folder 26, Group I, Series G, Box 147 (N.C. Branch Files), NAACP Papers. The first chapter was formed in Raleigh in Jan 1917, Application for Charter, Jan 1917, Folder 34, Group I, Series G, Box 148 (N.C. Branch Files), NAACP Papers. Local NAACP work seemed to decline with the war, as people are focused on war work: McCoy to Johnson, 8 Sep 1917, Folder 34, Group I, Series G, Box 148 (N.C. Branch Files), NAACP Papers.

manage social relations than interpersonal means.²² When some counties attempted to create vigilance committees to enforce loyalty (primarily of Black citizens) and white mobs threatened to lynch Black men accused or arrested for crimes, Bickett called out the state's Home Guard to prevent mob violence.²³ His support for the safety of Black lives from mob violence did not escape the notice of many African Americans in the state, who were grateful for his intervention for the remainder of his life.²⁴

Bickett and the men and women he appointed to take charge of the state Council of Defense and its mobilization activities in North Carolina expected little from African Americans in the state. They also shared in the fear common among the white elites that any organization of Black North Carolinians for wartime service would upend white political, economic, and social supremacy in the state. The state Council of Defense thus actively constrained opportunities for African American participation in the war. Much like they had constrained the war work of women, the North Carolina Council of Defense curtailed the ability of African Americans to participate in wartime mobilization and directed it toward areas that would least threaten white supremacy in the state. Even in those areas, the state Council prevented any large-scale organization or inclusion in decision making.

While the state was constraining the ability of African Americans to support the war effort, the national government and non-governmental groups were pushing for greater African

²² For instance, in one speech, Bickett said that "it was the unalterable determination of the whites to keep in their own hands the reins of government." House, *Public Letters and Papers of Thomas Walter Bickett*, 291. Also see Haley, *Charles N. Hunter*, 291-292, 297-298; *The Morning Star* (Wilmington, N.C.), 11 Nov 1918, Folder 10, Box 10, WWI 2; Crow, et al, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina*, 133.

²³ Wilson to Lewis, 10 Jul 1917, Folder 3, Box 2, WWI 1; Correspondence between Hill and McCormick, 31 Jan and 2 Feb 1918, Folder 14, Box 11, WWI 1; Hill to McCormick, 2 Feb 1918, Folder 27, Box 9, WWI 2; McCormick to Hill, 19 Feb 1918, Folder 27, Box 9, WWI 2; NAACP Report, 4 Feb 1918, Folder 35, Group I, Series G, Box 148 (N.C. Branch Files), NAACP Papers; "Negro Lynched by Crowd in Wake Co.," *Raleigh News and Observer*, 7 Nov 1918, Folder 31, Group I, Series C, Box 363 (N.C. Branch Files), NAACP Papers; Martin to Shillady, 23 Apr 1918, Group I, Series C, Box 363 (N.C. Branch Files), NAACP Papers; Shillady to Martin, 10 May 1918, Group I, Series C, Box 363 (N.C. Branch Files), NAACP Papers; NAACP press release, 18 Nov 1918, Group I, Series C, Box 363 (N.C. Branch Files), NAACP Papers.

²⁴ Memorial book for Bickett, undated, P.C. 216.11.

American inclusion and organization. Over time, this push forced the leaders of the North Carolina Council of Defense to consider greater integration than they preferred, though not truly in any appreciable degree. This negotiation between national and state leaders provided additional space for Black men and women to resist being marginalized, increasing areas in which they could support the war effort, specifically below the state level. By the end of the war, it was clear that African American men and women in North Carolina had assumed the obligations of citizenship and participated in key areas of home front mobilization, despite the structural and continued prevention of their full citizenship rights.²⁵

Structuring the Exclusion of African Americans in Mobilization

The political elite of North Carolina viewed African American citizens in their state primarily as a liability when the United States entered the First World War in April 1917. The perception of their liability crept into conversations at the conference of states called by the Council of National Defense in Washington, D.C. in May, when state representatives discussed the mobilization and deployment of their state's National Guard forces to France and the resultant gap in security for their state governments.²⁶ In North Carolina, specifically, the two primary internal security concerns centered on race relations, including the fear that, without the National Guard in the state, socio-political order could not be policed as well as concerns about the loyalty

²⁵ Haley, *Charles N. Hunter*, 211

²⁶ Rexford L. Holmes and the United States Council of National Defense, "National Defense Conference Held Under the Auspices of the Council of National Defense, May 2 and 3, 1917," Transcript of Proceedings, Washington, D.C, 1917, pages 44-45, 17-B.2, Administrative File, Box 1095, RG 62, NARA; Council of National Defense, "Answer to Questions Submitted to the Council of National Defense on Behalf of the Governors and their Representatives Attending the National Defense Conference Held in Washington, May 2 and 3, 1917," 2-C.1, Box 112, RG 62, NARA, 7; Council of National Defense, Report, 18 June 1917, Record Group 62, 21-22; North Carolina Council of Defense, memorandum, "Suggested Activities," Folder 14, Box 13, WWI 1; Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 11.

of Black communities to the war effort.²⁷ Such fears persisted throughout the war, even though the establishment of Home Guard units at municipal and county levels created a new armed force to defend public order, while an upsurge in public and private communication by prominent African Americans in the state reduced fears that German spies would co-opt or influence Black men and women into sabotage or other nefarious activity.²⁸

Aside from supporting the establishment of Home Guard militia units and the communicating concerns of loyalty to Black communities to prevent challenges to the state's socio-political order, the North Carolina Council of Defense did very little to engage with the state's African American communities until the fall of 1917. In fact, according to historian William Breen, the standing position of the Council of Defense was that, aside from infrequently consulting with individual Black men they trusted, "there was to be no unnecessary organization in the black community if it could be avoided."²⁹ This approach was tested in October of 1917 when the Council of National Defense, in its role as a clearinghouse for sharing successful activities across the states, wrote to the North Carolina Council of Defense that it should emulate the organization of Black communities in Sumter County, South Carolina, which was successful in "rousing the negro to patriotic work."³⁰ For that reason, the national Council "recommended its adoption in every county of the State."³¹ This "Sumter Model" included the creation of Black executive committees in every township, organized under and responsible to local white

²⁷ Wilson to Anderson, 28 Jun 1917, Folder 2, Box 2, WWI 1; Wilson to Lewis, 10 July 1917, Folder 3, Box 2, WWI 1.

²⁸ On the Home Guard, see Wilson to Anderson, 28 Jun 1917, Folder 2, Box 2, WWI 1; Wilson to Lewis, 10 July 1917, Folder 3, Box 2, WWI 1; Frederick Lewis Allen, "The Council of Defense System: A History Submitted to the Director of the Council of National Defense," unpublished, pages 1-3, 17-B.1, Box 1053, RG 62, NARA. On loyalty, see Dudley to Bickett, 3 Apr 1917, Dudley to Bickett, 7 Apr 1917, Mebane to Bickett, 9 Apr 1917, black citizens in Durham, N.C. to Bickett, 9 Apr 1917, black citizens in Greensboro, NC to Bickett, 9 Apr 1917, Dudley to NC A&T students, 17 Apr 1917, and students at Shaw University to Bickett, 27 Apr 1917, Folder 4, G.P. 369; Hunter to Pou, 15 Aug 1917, Folder 1, P.C. 180.1 Pou Papers.

²⁹ Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 108.

³⁰ Council of National Defense to Wilson, 22 Oct 1917, Folder 6, Box 2, WWI 1.

³¹ *Ibid.*

committees, as well as the appointment of a Black field agent that was charged to travel around to communicate best practices and encourage war work, particularly in food production and conservation.³²

The prompting by the Council of National Defense to integrate African Americans was ignored by Hill and the state Council until the executive committee met in early December.³³ In this meeting, Hill was asked by the rest of the executive committee to write to all the county Council chairs to request their views on choosing one or two leading Black men in the county to provide “the views and needs of their race.”³⁴ From the state Council of Defense’s perspective, these Black men would be occasional consultants only, not members of any Councils of Defense, and were expressly forbidden to organize African Americans in any way.³⁵ Some executive board members, including secretary W.S. Wilson, were vocal in their aversion to even consultation, writing to other state Councils of Defense that if Black citizens were “encouraged to organize for patriotic purposes that some of their leaders would get the organization in hand and probably do more devilment with it than they would do good.”³⁶ The “devilment” that men like Wilson clearly feared was any contestation of the white supremacist socio-political order in North Carolina.

Many of the county Councils of Defense were less averse to integrating their Black communities than the state Council. Some counties, particularly those in the eastern Inner Banks and Southeast sections of the state included mixed white and Black communities, with white landed elites depending on Black tenant farmers for their livelihoods. Other sections, such as the rural counties of the Triangle and Triad, also had extensive experience navigating cross-racial interaction. In both cases, white leadership at the local level felt fairly secure in their socio-

³² Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 108.

³³ North Carolina Council of Defense, Executive Committee Meeting Notes, 3 Dec 1917, Folder 13, Box 13, WWI 1.

³⁴ 10 Dec 1917, Hill to County CoDs, Folder 7, “Negros,” Box 13, WWI 1.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Wilson to Oklahoma Council of Defense, 27 Dec 1917, Folder 8, Box 2, WWI 1.

political power over Black populations and held paternalistic views of their African American neighbors. In response to Hill's letter requesting their input, many county chairs in these areas indicated they were already communicating with African Americans in their area or agreed that some greater inclusion was warranted. How this might be done, however, differed. In the eastern part of the state, the Beaufort County Council chair thought providing a few Black advisors an official title and an appointment from Governor Bickett would impress African Americans in the area who are "easily led and more easily flattered," thereby encouraging support. However, the chair agreed with the state Council that local Black communities should not be organized for systematic war work to prevent them from "fussing among themselves."³⁷ In the center of the state, members of the Guilford and Orange County Councils had already communicated with a few local Black elites "to talk over matters that [they] though[t] was to the best interest of the colored race."³⁸ While content to have them meet with the local Council of Defense as a way to create a channel of communication to local Black communities, they advised against large meetings or official organization, fearing greater involvement than token spokesmen in their counties would challenge the Council's ability to control African American support of mobilization activities.³⁹

Other counties, particularly those with large urban areas like Raleigh and Wilmington, supported more rigorous and direct integration of African Americans into organizing for war work. For example, the Wake County Council, which included Raleigh in its borders, recommended the creation of a separate county-level "permanent committee of negroes" that

³⁷ Grimes to Hill, 12 Dec 1917, Folder 7, Box 13, WWI 1.

³⁸ Vanstory to Hill, 12 Dec 1917, Folder 15, Box 21, WWI 1; Webb to Hill, 12 Dec 1917, Folder 17, Box 22, WWI 1.

³⁹ Taylor to Hill, 13 Dec 1917, Folder 15, Box 21, WWI 1; Hill to Guilford County Council of Defense, 14 Dec 1917, Folder 15, Box 21, WWI 1.

could “occasionally meet with the Council.”⁴⁰ The New Hanover County Council, encompassing Wilmington, also quickly worked to include African American elites in their work, having already invited a small group of men to serve as advisors and channels of communication to “see that our colored population is kept in touch with our activities.”⁴¹ These men included publicist and intimate of the Tuskegee Institute, George F. King, and Thomas H. Knight, who was tied into associational efforts in Wilmington, from Red Cross work to supporting draft registration and Y.M.C.A. efforts on behalf of soldiers.⁴² Both men were enthusiastic supporters of the war effort and worked diligently to integrate their fellow African Americans into mobilization activities.⁴³

The state Council’s preferences for limited engagement with African Americans when it came to mobilization shifted slightly based upon county Council input, leading to an ad hoc, informal consultation approach. As the war moved into 1918, the state Council of Defense was content to let the county Councils manage the inclusion of Black citizens into their work, as long as there were no formal ties to the Council System and the counties prevented systematic organization of African Americans. Such a consultation model became the norm in the state, focusing such activities at the county level or below.⁴⁴ However, whether deliberately or as a testament to the ineffectiveness of the Council’s consultation model, white leaders rarely picked

⁴⁰ Broughton to Hill, 12 Dec 1917, Folder 25, Box 23, WWI 1.

⁴¹ McCormick to Hill, 18 Dec 1917, Folder 7, Box 13, WWI 1; Sprunt to Hill, 14 Dec 1917, Folder 7, Box 13, WWI 1; New Hanover County Council of Defense to Knight, Wilson, King, and Hill, 14 Dec 1917, Folder 26, Box 9, WWI 2; Sprunt to Hill, 11 Feb 1918, Folder 27, Box 9, WWI 2; Hill to Sprunt, 12 Feb 1918, Folder 27, Box 9, WWI 2.

⁴² King to Hill, 22 Jan 1918, Folder 7, Box 13, WWI 1; Knight to Hill, 21 Dec 1917, Folder 7, Box 13, WWI 1.

⁴³ George King to Hill, 19 Jan 1918, Folder 9, Box 2, WWI 1.

⁴⁴ William J. Breen, “Southern Women in the War: The North Carolina Woman’s Committee, 1917-1919,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 55, no. 3 (1978): 278; Minutes of Executive Meeting, Woman’s Committee, February 14, 1918, and North Carolina Council of Defense to Taylor, 19 Feb 1918, Folder 10, Box 2, WWI 1.

the most effective leaders in the Black community, defaulting to those who worked best with whites, not necessarily their fellow African Americans.⁴⁵

By February 1918, the North Carolina Council of Defense began again feeling pressure from Washington as the Council of National Defense raised the issue of racial integration into war work. The Council of National Defense called a conference of all the southern state Councils in Birmingham, Alabama to discuss issues specific to this region. Led by the national Council's field agent James Scherer, one of the primary purposes of the conference was to discuss and gain agreement on a previously shared draft memorandum detailing a program for organizing African American support for the war effort.⁴⁶ Many of the southern state Councils, including North Carolina, pushed back on the originally proposed program at the conference, forcing Scherer to water down the language to bring it closer to the preferred consultation approach.

The national Council remained obstinate in its desire to better organize Black citizens in the South, seen in the post-conference publication of the national Council's General Letter No. 44, "Program for Organization of Negroes by the Southern State Councils."⁴⁷ The program included elements the state Council was willing to support, and others antithetical to their views of how to manage race relations in North Carolina. Hill and the Council could support an increased push to communicate with Black communities broadly, as well as information and recommendations for how African Americans in the state might better conserve food, support wartime financing like buying War Savings Stamps, and work in relief efforts like those

⁴⁵ Breen, "Southern Women in the War," 279n109.

⁴⁶ Robinson to Hill, 6 Feb 1918, Hill to Robinson, 7 Feb 1918, and Hill to Robinson, 11 Feb 1918, Folder 10, Box 2, WWI 1; Committee on Public Information, *The Official Bulletin* 2, no. 253, 9 Mar 1918, p. 5; Committee on Public Information, *Complete Report of the Chairman of the Committee on Public Information, 1917-1919* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1920), 35.

⁴⁷ Council of National Defense to State Councils of Defense, General Letter No. 44, 23 Feb 1918, Folder 7, Box 13, WWI 1; Council of National Defense to State Councils of Defense, General Letter No. 44, 23 Feb 1918, Box 2, James Augustin Brown Scherer Papers, 1916-1943, The Huntington Library, San Marino, C.A. (hereafter Scherer Papers).

undertaken by the Red Cross, Y.M.C.A., and Y.W.C.A.⁴⁸ But the more expansive recommendations went directly against North Carolina's consultation approach, including a recommendation that the state Council, "Call together in conference prominent Negro men and women of the State and appoint a committee composed of some men and women as the Negro Committee of the State Council, and appoint Negro field agents to assist in the organization of the Negroes in the various counties."⁴⁹ Such statewide organization and integration of African Americans into the mobilization effort were antithetical to the state Council. So was the recommendation that the state Council hold mass meetings of Black citizens at the county and local levels and establish a county-level African American committee to organize them for war work.⁵⁰ Clearly, the national Council assumed the southern states did not know how to organize the Black populations in their states, as opposed to believing, at least in the case of North Carolina, that they simply did not wish to. Strikingly, the recommendations the national Council provided are the same steps and actions the state Council had undertaken with little to no prompting in organizing the white citizens of North Carolina over the previous eight months. If they would have found value in organizing Black citizens, they could have easily done so along similar lines.

The national Council viewed the integration of Black Americans into wartime activities as crucial to increase the capability of the nation to mobilize for war, while the state Council only saw the possibility of political and social upheaval. Take, for instance, the North Carolina Council of Defense's response to General Letter No. 44, which reveals the Council's aversion to

⁴⁸ Council of National Defense to State Councils of Defense, General Letter No. 44, 23 Feb 1918, Enclosure "Program for Organization of Negroes by the Southern State Councils," 14-B.4, Box 774, RG 62, NARA, pp. 2-3. An example of support for such activities among North Carolina's Black communities can be seen in King to Hill, 13 Feb 1918, Folder 10, Box 2, WWI 1; Sprunt to McCormick, 16 Apr 1918, Folder 50, Box 15, WWI 1; and Knight to Hill, 27 Jun 1918, Folder 7, Box 13, WWI 1.

⁴⁹ Council of National Defense, Enclosure "Program for Organization of Negroes by the Southern State Councils," 1.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

statewide organization of African Americans in the state, as well as its perception that those on the national Council simply did not understand race relations in the South. Both Hill and Council Secretary W.S. Wilson informed the national Council that they would not be organizing Black citizens beyond their present limited use as advisory consultants at the county level. They claimed that this consultation approach “work[ed] very well and so far the negroes throughout the State have been very loyal and have given but slight trouble.”⁵¹ It is telling that the state Council focused on loyalty and trouble, and not on integrating Black citizens to increase state and national capability. As far as Hill and the Council were concerned, African American communities were a liability to be mitigated, not a pool of potential volunteers for wartime activities.

The national council responded to the rebuff by the North Carolina Council in a handful of ways. First, the national Council reported to its Chair, Secretary of War Baker, that there was no pushback against its program for African American organization (a lie).⁵² The Council also reported that North Carolina was organizing committees at the county level that would perform the necessary organizing function for the state (an embellishment).⁵³ Finally, and more accurately, the Council questioned its state counterpart’s approach, pointing out the hypocrisy of organizing white citizens but not Black ones in the state, asking exactly “what particular work the negro committees have undertaken which has not been undertaken also by the white members of

⁵¹ Wilson to Porter, 28 Feb 1918, Folder 10, Box 2, WWI 1; Hill to Council of National Defense, 27 Feb 1918 Folder 10, Box 2, WWI 1; Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 110, 235n35.

⁵² Council of National Defense, “Response to General Letter No. 44 Calling for Organization of the Negroes,” 15 March 1918, 14-A.3, Box 753, RG 62, NARA.

⁵³ Council of National Defense, State Councils Section, Weekly Report No. 30, 11 Mar 1918, Folder 5, Box 6, Robinson Papers. Also see an earlier report indicating the North Carolina Council of Defense was placating the national Council by setting up a committee to “consider” the integration of Black citizens in the Council of Defense System: Council of National Defense, State Councils Section, Weekly Report No. 17, 10 Dec 1917, Folder 5, Box 6, Robinson Papers.

County Councils.”⁵⁴ Into late summer 1918, the Council of National Defense remained unable to effectively push state Councils to take up its recommendations.⁵⁵

The failure of southern states to integrate Black Americans into mobilization activities began to create tensions at the national governmental level by July 1918. Other federal agencies, particularly the Labor Department, the U.S. Food Administration, and the Committee of Public Information, began to make plans to bypass the Council of Defense System in the states to better reach African American communities and integrate them into their work.⁵⁶ Such disparate efforts at the federal level led the Council of National Defense to fear that it would lose what little influence over mobilization activities it had developed with the states. In response, the national Council began to take a harder line, publishing General Letter No. 117 on the “Organization of Negroes.”⁵⁷ This letter highlighted the previously ineffective recommendations, but attempted to increase the urgency by stating that, “The consolidation of your Negro population behind the United States in the war is of vital importance, and is now receiving attention from various Federal authorities.”⁵⁸ The national Council was threatening that, unless action was taken by state Councils, there would be intervention by the national government. Federal action would not only diminish state capacity and authority but result in multiple parties “compet[ing] for Negro attention and support,” leading to African Americans “get[ting] a distorted impression of their importance in the war.”⁵⁹ These messages were tailored directly to the state Council’s fears, a tactic that was missing from the previously collegial and supportive recommendations by the national Council.

⁵⁴ Smith to Wilson, 5 Mar 1918, Folder 1, Box 3, WWI 1; North Carolina Council of Defense, Response to General Letter No. 44, 23 Feb 1918, Folder 7, Box 13, WWI 1.

⁵⁵ Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 108-110.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 111

⁵⁷ Council of National Defense to State Councils of Defense, General Letter No. 117, 24 Jul 1918, Folder 7, Box 13, WWI 1.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁵⁹ Allen, “The Council of Defense System,” 228-229.

While issuing these threats of federal intervention, the Council of National Defense nonetheless insisted that “the State Council is responsible for the mobilization of resources of the State.”⁶⁰ For that reason, and the fact that “Some organization of the Negroes is inevitable,” the state Councils should actively take the lead in organizing their Black citizens for war work and African Americans should be “a definite part of the State Council.”⁶¹ Again, trying to speak to the issues pertinent to southern white supremacy to try and move the southern states, the national Council indicated this would prevent any form of separate organization among federal agencies and state Councils.⁶² With its General Letter No. 117, the Council of National Defense was no longer requesting, but rather ordering southern state Councils of Defense what to do in regards to the organization of African Americans and threatening “unfortunate effect” if they failed to do so.⁶³

Such moves by the federal government to ensure the inclusion of African Americans in the wartime mobilization became more acute when the Committee on Public Information named Black speakers in North Carolina to canvas the state and “cover every community in the country with a definite patriotic education campaign.”⁶⁴ This move threatened the North Carolina Council of Defense’s consultation model, assuming the appointment role for spokesmen and creating alternate lines of communication to, and possibly organization of, African American communities in the state. State Council Chair Hill responded to the naming of federal speakers in terse terms, stating that “Our Council has steadfastly believed that it would not be best to organize the negroes into a separate organization. We had been carrying them along with our own work.”⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Council of National Defense, General Letter No. 117, 1.

⁶¹ Council of National Defense, General Letter No. 117, 2.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 1.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁴ Fleming to North Carolina Council of Defense, 15 Aug 1918, Folder 7, Box 3, WWI 1.

⁶⁵ Fleming to North Carolina Council of Defense, 21 Aug 1918, Folder 7, Box 3, WWI 1; King to Hill, 6 Aug 1918, Folder 7, Box 3, WWI 1; Hill to King, 7 Aug 1918, Folder 7, Box 3, WWI 1.

Hill was helped by James Scherer, the national Council's field agent for the South, who relayed the sentiment that such an approach by the Committee on Public Information would antagonize racial sentiment – and by this he meant antagonize white citizens – and make the state Council's job more challenging.⁶⁶ This robust response by the North Carolina Council of Defense put the national Council back on its heels, with its representatives now conceding that “Of course, local conditions largely determine the form of Negro organization under the State Council.”⁶⁷ It also forced them to craft a note to be sent by the senior Black official in the War Department, Emmett Scott, to encourage the African American individuals chosen by the Committee on Public Information to speak in the state to “work in accordance with the program of the State Council” and ensure they consult with the state Council “before making plans for your speaking campaign.”⁶⁸

Within a month of the national Council attempting to push the North Carolina Council of Defense to integrate African Americans more fully into the war effort, and other federal agencies pushing their own efforts at organization, the national Council found itself backing off and allowing state leaders to exert their primacy in managing racial affairs. When the Council of National Defense amalgamated its State Councils Section and Woman's Committee into a new consolidated Field Division in October 1918, its officials attempted once again to get North Carolina to integrate Black citizens into the war effort.⁶⁹ Victorious in preventing such efforts in the past and already making plans for the anticipated end of the war, the North Carolina Council of Defense demurred. Hill expressed a willingness to allow a few Black advisors previously

⁶⁶ Council of National Defense, State Councils Section, Report Supplement No. 24, 27 Aug 1918, Folder 6, Box 6, Robinson Papers.

⁶⁷ Fleming to Hill, 31 Aug 1918, Folder 7, Box 3, WWI 1.

⁶⁸ Scott to Committee of One Hundred Speakers, 28 Aug 1918, Folder 7, Box 3, WWI 1.

⁶⁹ Council of National Defense to State Councils of Defense, 8 Oct 1918, Circular No. 3, Folder 10, Box 28, WWI 1.

consulting with County Councils to possibly advise the state executive committee.⁷⁰ But this was not a promise Hill ended up having to keep, as the war ended before such advisors were able to organize and interact with the state Council.⁷¹

Overall, the North Carolina Council of Defense was able to prevent large scale organizing or integration of African Americans into the mobilization of the state for the First World War. Despite this exclusion by leaders in the state, African Americans nonetheless participated in wartime work on a large scale. Over 142,000 Black men in North Carolina registered for the draft, and 22,499 served in uniform during the war.⁷² Thousands of others, men and women, also supported the military mobilization, as camp workers, nurses, Red Cross volunteers, and Y.M.C.A./Y.W.C.A. workers. Finally, thousands of Black men and women participated in resource management activities addressing shortages in food, labor, and fundraising.

Loyal and Patriotic: Professions of Black Citizenship

The first major challenge the African American communities of North Carolina experienced with the entry of the United States into the war in 1917 – in fact, in the months leading up to the United States joining the First World War – was white fear of Black disloyalty. As mentioned previously, most state leaders saw only liability when it came to their Black citizens, whether because they feared challenges to the state’s white supremacist socio-political order or a white backlash to Black activities. Fears of disloyalty surged as rumors spread of

⁷⁰ Hill to African American leaders, 12 Oct 1918, Folder 7, Box 13, WWI 1.

⁷¹ Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 111

⁷² Lemmon, *North Carolina’s Role in the First World War*, 23; Royster to Bickett, 1 Jan 1919, Folder 1, G.P. 380.

German spies visiting Black communities to incite them to sabotage or outright rebellion.⁷³ This “hysteria” stemmed from a feeling of vulnerability by white southerners caused by the war, as well as long-held fears of Black revenge if African Americans were given the opportunity.⁷⁴

African American leaders in North Carolina, as individuals and in groups, immediately countered such rumors, publishing newspaper articles and writing open letters that asserted Black loyalty to the nation.⁷⁵ A letter from students at Raleigh’s historically Black college Shaw University, for example, professed “loyalty to and support of the state and nation in the defending of our country and the maintaining of its honor,” and insisted that African Americans stood “ready to rally to the cause of our nation and to uphold the standard of loyalty which our people have demonstrated in every national crisis.”⁷⁶ Governor Bickett also requested investigations into allegations of Black disloyalty, such as one in December 1917 by J.O. Carr, the U.S. Attorney in Wilmington, which concluded that such allegations were false.⁷⁷ The impact of allegations of disloyalty, when paired with violence inflicted on African Americans in the South, extended beyond the state. Realizing the danger of traveling and meeting with fellow African Americans in North Carolina – for which he was invited by a local training school – Du Bois wrote to Scott, possibly in jest but if so, with a kernel of truth: “I am laying this matter [of my travels] before you

⁷³ William G. Jordan, *Black Newspapers and America’s War for Democracy, 1914-1920* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 68-72; Kornweibel, *No Crystal Stair*, 4-10.

⁷⁴ Theodore Kornweibel, *Investigate Everything: Federal Efforts to Compel Black Loyalty During World War I* (Bloomington, I.N.: Indiana University Press, 2002), 45.

⁷⁵ Dudley to Bickett, 3 Apr 1917, Dudley to Bickett, 7 Apr 1917, Mebane to Bickett, 9 Apr 1917, Black citizens in Durham, N.C. to Bickett, 9 Apr 1917, Black citizens in Greensboro, N.C. to Bickett, 9 Apr 1917, and Dudley to N.C. A&T students, 17 Apr 1917, Folder 4, G.P. 369; Thomas Knight, “Negroes Always Loyal,” *Dispatch*, 22 Mar 1918, Folder 6, Box 10, WWI 2; “Colored People Will Hold Meeting in St. Stephen’s Church,” *The Morning Star* (Wilmington, N.C.), 29 Mar 1918, Folder 6, Box 10, WWI 2; Thomas Knight, “Loyalty of the Negro,” *The Morning Star*, 28 Jul 1918, Folder 8, Box 10, WWI 2; Kornweibel, *Investigate Everything*, 39-40.

⁷⁶ Students at Shaw University to Bickett, 27 Apr 1917, Folder 4, G.P. 369.

⁷⁷ Hill to Carr, 22 Dec 1917, and Green to Harvey, 18 Jun 1918, Folder 14, Box 11, WWI 1; Kornweibel, *Investigate Everything*, 74.

because I am quite certain that unless I have my objects thoroughly understood, someone in North Carolina will discover that I am a German propagandist.”⁷⁸

In response, leaders like Governor Bickett, Council Chair Hill, and James Pou, a member of the North Carolina Council of Defense, privately and publicly supported Black North Carolinians, though framed it in the paternalistic fashion characteristic of white leaders of the South.⁷⁹ Their support mirrored that of other white citizens, including Granville County resident E.G. Hulse, who captured such sentiments after the war, writing, “Whatever other weakness the colored man may have, when it comes to loyalty and patriotism is 100 per cent. [sic] true.”⁸⁰ Such support was wholly dependent on the loyalty of Black citizens to not only white supremacy and the war, but to how North Carolina managed mobilization. In other words, white leaders, including those on the state Council of Defense, required Black communities to remain subservient to earn their support, foregoing any organizing among themselves, and remaining under the direction of white leadership. This sentiment was well captured by state Chairman Hill, who wanted white speakers to talk to local African American communities because Black citizens “want to do, but do not know how to do,” a fact that was largely forced on them by policies Hill himself created and enforced throughout the war.⁸¹

The most prominent area in which Black Americans sought to display their loyalty – as well as attempt to generate support for increased civil rights and more equal treatment by white

⁷⁸ Du Bois to Scott, 24 Apr 1918, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, <https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b013-i454>, accessed 9 Feb 2022; Shepard to Du Bois, 20 Feb 1918, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, https://credo.library.umass.edu/search?q=* &sort=3a &facets=ZnE9RmFjZXRTZXJpZXNJRdptdW1zMzEyLXMwMUEmZnE9RmFjZXRUb3BpYzolzmlmJjXb3JsZCBXYXIsIDE5MTQtMTkxOCUyMiZmcT1GYWNIldE5hbWU6JTlyU2NvdHQsIEVtbWV0dCBKLiAoRW1tZXROIEpheSksIDE4NzMtMTk1NyUyMiY=, accessed 9 Feb 2022.

⁷⁹ Hunter to Pou, 15 Aug 1917, Folder 1, P.C. 180.1, Pou Papers; Shepard to Pou, 18 Aug 1917, Folder 1, P.C. 180.1, Pou Papers.

⁸⁰ E.G. Hulse, *Granville County in the World War* (Oxford, N.C.: Press of Oxford Orphanage, 1920), 209.

⁸¹ Hill to Grimes, 25 Jun 1917, Folder 7, Box 13, WWI 1; “Negroes Will Celebrate,” *The Morning Star* (Wilmington, N.C.), 4 Jul 1918, Folder 8, Box 10, WWI 2; *The Morning Star* (Wilmington, N.C.), 5 Jul 1918, Folder 8, Box 10, WWI 2.

citizens – was through military service. However, Black men encountered white hostility in their attempts to serve their country, shaping the conscription of Black men for military service, as well as what roles they would play in uniform.⁸² Many white leaders in North Carolina shared the sentiments of some military professionals that Black men would not make good soldiers, as they would not be able “to endure the hardships of trench warfare...[or]...withstand night attacks,” as one North Carolina merchant relayed to Governor Bickett. According to this merchant, “depleting the labor supply of the South by drafting the negro into military service when he is incapable of taking a man’s part” was foolish.⁸³ Instead, “since the negro is especially qualified and indispensably necessary to the success of Southern agriculture” they should “be utilized to [their] utmost as a laborer.”⁸⁴ Such attitudes were deeply ingrained among white southerners despite the meritorious service of Black regiments in the Spanish-Cuban-American War, American-Philippine War, or the recent Mexican Expedition.⁸⁵

There was also a general fear by white southerners of the idea of arming Black men that had been oppressed and abused by them for centuries. This fear was heightened by an incident in Houston, Texas in August 1917, just as the draft was fully brought into effect. In that instance, two Black soldiers from the Regular Army’s 24th Infantry Regiment were beaten by white policemen, resulting in an escalation of violence that ended with sixteen local white men dead, including five policemen.⁸⁶ This event triggered significant racial tension throughout the country. National and state leaders feared escalating violence, both from white mobs bent on retribution,

⁸² Edward M. Coffman, *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I* (Madison, W.I.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), 69-73; John Whiteclay Chambers, *To Raise an Army: The Draft Comes to Modern America* (New York, N.Y.: Free Press, 1987), 222-226.

⁸³ Taylor to Bickett, 23 Jan 1918, Folder 5, P.C. 216.2.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Khary Oronde Polk, *Contagions of Empire: Scientific Racism, Sexuality, and Black Military Workers Abroad, 1898-1948* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 27-47; Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy*, 28-32; Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles*, 19-22.

⁸⁶ Baker to Webb, 21 Dec 1917, Group I, Series C, Box 63, NAACP Papers; Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 59-69.

as well as from African American communities, particularly after the War Department executed thirteen Black soldiers involved in the incident.⁸⁷ Southern whites argued for a shift of the training of Black soldiers away from southern states, a stance supported by the members of the North Carolina Council of Defense, who were particularly worried about the importation and training of northern Black soldiers at Camp Greene outside Charlotte.⁸⁸ This resulted in, according to a post-war lecture on mobilization at the Army's General Staff College, the distribution of "the colored draft throughout the various cantonments instead of sending them to the cantonments pertaining to the state from which the various colored quotas were drawn...with the [division of African-American soldiers] not concentrated in one cantonment, but to be formed of colored regiments organized in various cantonments, and then brought together into a division."⁸⁹ Additionally, the War Department's decision to assign Black troops overwhelmingly as general laborers instead of combat soldiers, and delay their induction until March 1918, was intended to allay the various concerns of southern whites.⁹⁰

From the perspective of African Americans, another incident caused hesitancy to support military service. The most prominent Black military officer, Colonel Charles Young, was forced to retire for medical reasons in the summer of 1917, just as the military was expanding, cutting short what was likely a rise to general officer rank for Young – the first Black man to achieve such rank.⁹¹ Even with support from General Pershing, who had promoted Young to lieutenant

⁸⁷ Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles*, 71-74.

⁸⁸ Drane to Hill, 3 Aug 1917, Folder 7, Box 22, WWI 1; Hill to Drane, 6 Aug 1917, Folder 7, Box 22, WWI 1.

⁸⁹ Henry Jervey, "Mobilization of the Emergency Army," lecture delivered at the General Staff College, Washington, D.C., 3 Jan 1920, Center for Military History, Washington, D.C., 9-10; Drane to Hill, 3 Aug 1917, Folder 7, Box 22, WWI 1; Hill to Drane, 6 Aug 1917, Folder 7, Box 22, WWI 1; Hill to Drane, 9 Aug 1917, Folder 7, Box 22, WWI 1.

⁹⁰ Crowder to Bickett, 5 Mar 1918, Folder 3, G.P. 374; Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 223; Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles*, 94-95; Barbeau and Henri, *The Unknown Soldiers*, 89-110.

⁹¹ The Army posthumously promoted Young to general officer in 2022, with Secretary of the Army Christine Wormuth informing his descendants of the promotion on 19 Jan 2022. Steve Rogers, "Army promotes Kentucky's Charles Young to brigadier general posthumously," WTVQ,

colonel during the Mexican Expedition, and longtime friend Du Bois, Young was sidelined from the war or even the training of Black men for service.⁹²

Despite the adverse treatment, and the general ambivalence or apathy many African Americans displayed toward the war, Black North Carolinians sought to become soldiers and serve in the war.⁹³ Recruits included men who had previously served in uniform and wanted to enter the war as officers, as well as men entering service for the first time. The War Department, after pressure from Black elites and interest groups like the NAACP, established an officer training camp for African Americans at Fort Dodge outside Des Moines, Iowa.⁹⁴ In the summer of 1917, simultaneous to registration for the Selective Service, fifty college-educated Black men from North Carolina boarded a train for training, including James Alston and Robert Campbell.⁹⁵

<https://www.wtvq.com/army-promotes-kentuckys-charles-young-to-brigadier-general-posthumously/>, accessed 3 Feb 2022.

⁹² Du Bois to McCain, June 1917, Du Bois Papers,

https://credo.library.umass.edu/search?q=*&sort=3a&facets=ZnE9RmFjZXRTZXJpZXNJRdptdW1zMzEyLXMwMUEmZnE9RmFjZXRUb3BpYz0lMjJXb3JsZCBXYXIsIDE5MTQtMTkxOCUyMiZmcT1GYWNldE5hbWU6JTlYU2NvdHQSIEVtbWV0dCBKLiAoRW1tZXR0IEpheSksIDE4NzMtMTk1NyUyMiY=, accessed 9 Feb 2022; Young to Du Bois, 20 Jun 1917, Du Bois Papers,

https://credo.library.umass.edu/search?q=*&sort=3a&facets=ZnE9RmFjZXRTZXJpZXNJRdptdW1zMzEyLXMwMUEmZnE9RmFjZXRUb3BpYz0lMjJXb3JsZCBXYXIsIDE5MTQtMTkxOCUyMiZmcT1GYWNldE5hbWU6JTlYU2NvdHQSIEVtbWV0dCBKLiAoRW1tZXR0IEpheSksIDE4NzMtMTk1NyUyMiY=, accessed 9 Feb 2022; and Du Bois to Lippman 29 Jun 1917, Du Bois Papers,

https://credo.library.umass.edu/search?q=*&sort=3a&facets=ZnE9RmFjZXRTZXJpZXNJRdptdW1zMzEyLXMwMUEmZnE9RmFjZXRUb3BpYz0lMjJXb3JsZCBXYXIsIDE5MTQtMTkxOCUyMiZmcT1GYWNldE5hbWU6JTlYU2NvdHQSIEVtbWV0dCBKLiAoRW1tZXR0IEpheSksIDE4NzMtMTk1NyUyMiY=, accessed 9 Feb 2022; Kilroy, *For Race and Country*; Brian G. Shellum, *Black Officer in a Buffalo Soldier Regiment: The Military Career of Charles Young* (Lincoln, N.E.: University of Nebraska Press, 2010); Ellis, *Race, War, and Surveillance*, 54-55; NAACP, Board Minutes, 17 Sep 1917, Du Bois to Baker, 18 Sep 1917, and F.P. Keppel to Du Bois, 19 Sep 1917, Reel 5, Du Bois Papers.

⁹³ Kornweibel, *Investigate Everything*, 80; Jordan, *Black Newspapers*, 6; Kornweibel - "Apathy and Dissent," 322-38.

⁹⁴ C.E. Kilbourne, Headquarters, Southeastern Department, memorandum, 24 May 1917, Folder 28, Box 5, WWI 3; Evans to Hunt, 25 May 1917, Folder 28, Box 5, WWI 3.

⁹⁵ "Equality of Citizenship," *Washington Bee*, 17 Mar 1917, "Officers Training Camps," *Atlanta Independent*, 24 May 1917, "The Training Camp," *Washington Bee*, 2 Jun 1917, "Forty-Nine Leave from Raleigh," *New York Age*, 14 Jun 1917, "Negroes in Training Camp," *New York Times*, 19 Jun 1917, and

Both men would leave training as lieutenants and serve in France. Alston would serve in the 93rd Division as an infantry officer, serving under French command in the Meuse-Argonne sector, and later in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive.⁹⁶ He was wounded twice before returning home in early 1919. Campbell, who at the beginning of the war was a military instructor and machine technical instructor at North Carolina A&T University in Greensboro, joined the 92nd Division and saw significant combat together with French units on the front lines, earning the U.S. Distinguished Service Cross – the second-highest military honor behind the Medal of Honor – and two Croix de Guerre for valor from the French.⁹⁷ This service record threw into sharp relief white racial paranoia concerning the loyalty of Black men and their capability to serve in uniform.

The draft was another avenue for service by Black North Carolinians, one that many were willing to support. The state Council of Defense prevented the inclusion of any African Americans in the administration of the Selective Service System in the state, removing the few Black men nominated to serve on registration boards in Wake County.⁹⁸ Instead, African Americans would only be subjects of the draft, not participants.⁹⁹ As historian Mark Ellis has

“Large Delegation from North Carolina,” *New York Age*, 21 Jun 1917, Folder “1913-1917 News Clippings,” Group I, Series C, Box 376, NAACP Papers.

⁹⁶ See also Anson County soldier H.P. Taylor of the 93rd, Daughters of the American Revolution Craighead-Dunlap Chapter, *Anson County in the World War* (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards & Broughton Company, 1929), 397-398, 404; James Alston Service Card, in Janet G. Hudson, ed., Black Soldiers Mattered Project, http://blacksoldiersmattered.com/soldier?id=WW-I-Card_World-War-I-Service-Card-a_01145.tif, accessed 3 Feb 2022.

⁹⁷ Robert Campbell Service Card, in Janet G. Hudson, ed., Black Soldiers Mattered Project, http://blacksoldiersmattered.com/soldier?id=WW-I-Card_World-War-I-Service-Card-i_11342.tif, accessed 3 Feb 2022.

⁹⁸ “Wake Eliminates the Negro as a Registrar,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 22 May 1917, Folder 18, Box 11, WWI 2.

⁹⁹ Crowder to Bickett, 27 May 1917, Folder 5, G.P. 369.

observed, “All that mattered was the compliance of the mass of African Americans with the draft and other wartime measures.”¹⁰⁰

Enforced compliance through the draft disproportionately targeted Black men in the state, a structural feature the state Council of Defense put into place based upon the men they appointed to local draft boards. Disproportionate compliance can be seen in general induction numbers, with over twenty-seven percent of Black registrants being inducted compared to under twenty-five percent of white registrants. More severely, according to the War Department, desertions were disproportionately charged to Black men over white, with almost seven percent of African Americans deserting when called to serve, versus less than one percent of white draftees.¹⁰¹ This difference reflected the workings of white supremacy, not a greater propensity of Black men to attempt to escape from military service. From registration through classification, publicity and information provided by the state Council to white men were not tailored equally to Black men, frequently leaving these potential draftees unclear as to the requirements of Selective Service. Even more maliciously, many Black men were deliberately misinformed by whites in positions of power over them, with some bosses even withholding mailed classification information or draft notices.¹⁰² Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 2, the draft system forgave white slackers or deserters, coaxing them back onto the proper path of service, while treating Black men as disloyal and disobedient, with Governor Bickett and other mobilization leaders seeking out and drafting Black men for slights to the system.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Ellis, *Race, War, and Surveillance*, 73.

¹⁰¹ U.S. War Department, *Second Report of the Provost Marshal General to the Secretary of War on the Operations of the Selective Service System to December 20, 1918* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1919), 78-79; Kornweibel, *Investigate Everything*, 88.

¹⁰² Kornweibel, *Investigate Everything*, 87.

¹⁰³ Bickett to Reinhardt, 1 Aug 1918, Smith to Bickett, 5 Aug 1918, and Bickett to Fayetteville Local Exemption Board, 6 Aug 1918, Folder 1, G.P. 376.

Ultimately, over 22,000 Black men were drafted into service from North Carolina.¹⁰⁴ Among them was Ernest McKissick from Asheville, who joined the 92nd Division as an artilleryman.¹⁰⁵ When he was interviewed about his experiences during the war in 1977, McKissick was clear-eyed about his service in a segregated Army, saying “We knew where we were, and that was the way of life. They [white soldiers] knew that was prejudice, and of course some were meaner than others.”¹⁰⁶ Like many Black North Carolinians, McKissick fought for his nation and “tried to make it safe for democracy,” but ultimately came up short “because democracy wasn't working at all at home ‘cause they hadn't done anything for [Black citizens]. We had Jim Crow and all. They tried to put us down in every way.”¹⁰⁷ Black North Carolinians experienced the same treatment at home, as well, with the state Council of Defense and other coordinators of mobilization preventing their inclusion in state activities.

Home Front Support

Black North Carolinians not eligible for the draft supported those who were, an area of wartime participation that did not threaten the state’s socio-political order given the white-imposed segregation of soldiers. However, such activities were not coordinated by, nor integrated into, state level mobilization managed by the state Council of Defense, which as previously mentioned, actively pushed against Black organization throughout the war. Despite this, home front activities by Black citizens in the state supported African American soldiers from the

¹⁰⁴ North Carolina Adjutant General’s Officer, “Statistical Report, 1927,” Folder 8, A.G. 84.1. As discussed earlier, they would not be called until the spring of 1918, owing to concerns about training African Americans in the South and taking agricultural labor before the harvest. Bickett to Williams, 15 Feb 1918, Folder 7, P.C. 216.2; Crowder to Bickett, 5 Mar 1918, Folder 3, G.P. 374.

¹⁰⁵ Ernest McKissick Service Card, Janet G. Hudson, ed., Black Soldiers Mattered Project, http://blacksoldiersmattered.com/soldier?id=WW-I-Card_World-War-I-Service-Card-4-b_01802.tif, accessed 3 Feb 2022.

¹⁰⁶ Louis D. Silveri, interview transcript, 2 Aug 1977, p. 9, Southern Highlands Research Center, University of North Carolina at Asheville, in Folder 5, Box 1, Ernest B. McKissick Papers, Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (hereafter McKissick Papers).

¹⁰⁷ Louis D. Silveri, interview transcript, 2 Aug 1977, p. 10, McKissick Papers.

induction of draftees, to the training camp, and up to their deployment overseas. Such support could not bridge the Atlantic, however, as the segregated American state could not abide Black men and women overseas unless they were under the command of white men in uniform. Even the American Red Cross, an organization that integrated African Americans in their work more than any other national organization, refused to send Black Americans overseas to avoid upsetting white Americans or endangering the organization's work.¹⁰⁸ In the United States, however, women provided entertainment and refreshment for Black soldiers through the Red Cross and Y.M.C.A., as well as Black men and women preparing men for service. In Wilmington, for instance, local African American leaders established a tradition of holding a community dinner the night before draftees left for training, providing moral support to the men leaving to defend their communities. These events also allowed white leaders in the city, many serving on the county Council of Defense, a moment to speak to local Black communities about the importance of loyalty and service, reifying the messages of the state Council of Defense.¹⁰⁹

Black men and women also advocated at the local and national level for better treatment of their soldiers, a practice that did create some friction with the War Department and the Council of Defense System, but only in that it displayed the damaging effect racism had on expanding the nation's military capacity.¹¹⁰ As the War Department acknowledged in September 1918, "Nothing could be more harmful to the Administration of the Draft than to have an impression prevail that

¹⁰⁸ Julia Irwin, *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation's Humanitarian Awakening* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2013), 102.

¹⁰⁹ *The Morning Star* (Wilmington, N.C.), 30 Apr 1918, Folder 7, Box 10, WWI 2; *The Morning Star* (Wilmington, N.C.), 21 Jun 1918, Folder 8, Box 10, WWI 2.

¹¹⁰ NAACP, Board of Directors Meeting, 8 Oct 1917, Du Bois Papers,

race discrimination exists in any section of the country.”¹¹¹ In addition to the dedicated work of the NAACP on this issue, local educator John D. Wray waded in on behalf of Black soldiers, pushing for equal consideration under the draft, better treatment at camp and in their units, and for combat service instead of just service in labor battalions.¹¹² Wray was well-respected by Black and white North Carolinians, having earned a Bachelor of Agriculture from the Agricultural and Technical College for the Colored Race in Greensboro. He also worked for Booker T. Washington at the Tuskegee Institute, as a professor at A&T College, and as an agent for North Carolina’s Agriculture Extension Service. Wray’s efforts led to multiple federal investigations and improvement in the lives of Black soldiers, though not directly in his home state.¹¹³ In the end, the War Department simply passed the allegations of mistreatment of Black soldiers in North Carolina on to the state’s Adjutant General, Beverly Royster, for investigation. There is no indication Royster, who also acted as the chair of the North Carolina Council of Defense’s Military Committee, investigated the issues Wray identified. White leaders of military mobilization were interested in drafting Black bodies as laborers, not as equal soldiers.

An area of support to soldiers that the state Council did support, however, was the communication of state needs to soldiers through Black speakers – an extension of the consultant approach described earlier. Desiring better compliance by Black North Carolinian soldiers at Camp Jackson, Bickett requested Colonel James H. Young and Berry O’Kelly visit to “make short patriotic speeches...to inspire them to more heroic service of their country.”¹¹⁴ Young was a former elected representative of the state General Assembly before the dismantlement of Fusion

¹¹¹ Crowder to Scott, 9 Sep 1918, in Emmett J. Scott, *Scott’s Official History of the American Negro in the World War* (Chicago, I.L.: Homewood Press, 1919), 56-58.

¹¹² Scott, *Scott’s Official History*; Miller to Baker, 4 Feb 1918, Group I, Series C, Box 63, NAACP Papers.

¹¹³ Scott to Conkling, 3 Sep 1918, Crowder to Scott, 9 Sep 1918, and Crowder to Scott, 11 Oct 1918, in Scott, *Scott’s Official History*, 56-58.

¹¹⁴ Bickett to Young, 7 Feb 1918, Folder 2, G.P. 374; Bickett to McIver, 9 Feb 1918, Folder 2, G.P. 374.

politics in the state in 1899.¹¹⁵ He also served as a commander of a regiment of Black volunteers, the Third North Carolina Infantry, at the outbreak of the Spanish-Cuban-American War, making him a hero to African Americans in the state.¹¹⁶ Berry O’Kelly was a prominent Black leader in Wake County, having risen from being the son of a slave to own multiple business enterprises, banks, and large swaths of property in the Raleigh area. By the First World War, his primary activity was promoting Black education, establishing the Berry O’Kelly Training School to develop county teachers and skilled industrial workers.¹¹⁷ Throughout the First World War, both men would be employed by the state Council to speak at patriotic rallies and to drafted Black soldiers. During their visit to Fort Jackson, the Council of Defense also asked Young and O’Kelly to encourage the soldiers to sign up for War Risk Insurance, a program that paid soldiers’ family members \$4,500 if they were killed or severely disabled.¹¹⁸ Hill and his Council recognized the economic value of even Black men getting this benefit, injecting “free” federal money into the state. The state Council funded the trip to Fort Jackson in return for the propaganda service Young and O’Kelly provided.¹¹⁹ Even in such support activities, Black North Carolinians were largely employed as communication conduits for the state Council, rather than included members. Hill and the Council could trust them to carry their messages to Black soldiers and communities, but not more meaningfully engage in mobilization activities.

The area in which African Americans in North Carolina were most able to participate in the state’s mobilization, specifically at the local level, was in food conservation and production.

¹¹⁵ Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina, 1894-1901* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 41-50, 97-102.

¹¹⁶ Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., “North Carolina’s Negro Regiment in the Spanish-American War,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 48, no. 4 (October 1971): 370-387.

¹¹⁷ L. M. Mason, “Historical Sketch of...Method,” Hunter Papers; “Berry O’Kelly Owner of Whole N.C. Town, Dies,” *The Afro-American* (Baltimore), 21 March 1931, <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1532&dat=19310321&id=Tn89AAAAIABAJ&sjid=XisMAAAAIABAJ&pg=3919,26856203>, accessed 4 Feb 2022.

¹¹⁸ Hill to McIver, 2 Feb 1918, Folder 10, Box 2, WWI 1.

¹¹⁹ Bickett to Young, 7 Feb 1918, Folder 2, G.P. 374.

Given their importance to the agricultural sector since before the United States became an independent nation, Black Americans were able to carve out areas in which they could diligently work on behalf of the state without threatening white citizens. Additionally, the severe shortage of agricultural labor in the state even before the United States entered the First World War gave Black citizens in the state more leverage in participating in food activities. Their importance on the farm was highlighted as Selective Service began drafting men into military service. Southern whites, including Governor Bickett and the leadership of the state Council of Defense, worried that the removal of Black men from the state would adversely impact the agricultural sector. These worries led state leadership to petition the federal government to delay the induction of Black registrants, instead allowing them to be “left at home to help make and cultivate the crops, and to improve the labor situation to a certain extent.”¹²⁰ As previously mentioned, the drafting of Black men was delayed until the spring of 1918, mostly as a reaction to racial tension caused by incidents at Houston and policy shifts for where Black soldiers were to be trained than as a measure to assuage southern whites.

As Governor Bickett established a Food Conservation Committee in April 1917, and as North Carolina grew its food efforts under state Food Administrator Henry Page, African Americans were able to expand their participation in food management areas, though still in circumscribed ways. For example, Charles Hunter, a principal of Berry O’Kelly’s Training School and the editor of the Raleigh *Independent*, worked with Page and his executive secretary John Paul Lucas of the Food Administration as a spokesman and consultant, pushing Black North Carolinians to greater effort at food conservation in his newspaper, but also in an attempt to share ideas with the state Food Administration to better organize African Americans in the state.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Bickett to Williams, 15 Feb 1918, Folder 7, P.C. 216.

¹²¹ Haley, *Charles N. Hunter*, 197; Hunter to Page, 9 Nov 1917, Lucas to Hunter, 12 Nov 1917, Hunter to Page 19 Nov 1917, and Hunter to Lucas, 26 Jan 1918, Hunter Papers.

Page, as well as Hill of the Council of Defense, were willing to employ Hunter as a communication avenue to Black citizens, paying him for his expenses as a speaker on their behalf. However, they refused his advice on further organizing Black communities as a part of food management efforts. When Hunter attempted to go around Page in May 1918 to get the federal Food Administration to enact his plans instead, Page and the North Carolina Council of Defense ended their relationship with him, effectively firing him and preventing him from further participation in food management activities with the state.¹²² State leadership, particularly Hill and his Council of Defense, would not deviate from their policy of integrating Black citizens in mobilization activities only as infrequent consultants and speakers.

Below the state level, however, Black men and women had more ability to participate in mobilization activities. For example, the New Hanover County Council of Defense incorporated Black men into their deliberations on food conservation. Beginning in November 1917, the County Council Chair and Wilmington merchant, J.G. McCormick, invited George King and Reverend Dr. A.J. Wilson to, in the words of King, “help accentuate essential matters” among Black citizens by meeting with the entire Council on how to communicate and organize Black county residents for food conservation and production work.¹²³ Together with Thomas Knight, who would also be invited to attend select Council events beginning in December, King and Wilson would become an infrequent participant of the County Council, though only engaged when requesting information on how to better communicate with local Black populations in the county, and primarily around food management.¹²⁴

¹²² Haley, 198, Hunter to Craig, 1 May 1918; Hunter to Doughton, 15 May 1918, and Lucas to Hunter, 16 May 1918, and Hunter to Lucas, 22 May 1918, Hunter Papers.

¹²³ King to Hill, 13 Feb 1918, Folder 10, Box 2, WWI 1.

¹²⁴ McCormick to Sprunt, 13 Nov 1917, Folder 26, Box 9, WWI 2; Sprunt to McCormick, 14 Nov 1917, Folder 26, Box 9, WWI 2; McCormick to Knight, 4 Dec 1917, McCormick to Wilson, 14 Dec 1917, and McCormick to King, 14 Dec 1917, Folder 26, Box 9, WWI 2.

The integration of Black North Carolinians into food management activities at the local level did increase as the war continued, despite the state Council's steadfast refusal to do so above the county Councils.¹²⁵ In addition to Black men being invited to take part in some county food advisory boards, as in New Hanover County, Black women were also encouraged to plant their own home gardens to increase food production – at least at the household level – and, more substantially, the state's agricultural extension program increased engagement with Black farmers by integrating men like John Wray into their food production efforts.¹²⁶

Wray was a teacher at North Carolina A&T and was the state's Farmer Makers' Club Agent. He was appointed to the latter position in 1915 by B.W. Kilgore, Director of the state Agriculture Extension Service and, from 1917-1919, the chair of the North Carolina Council of Defense's Committee for Conservation and Economy. As an agent of the Extension Service, Wray educated young Black men across the state in agricultural techniques.¹²⁷ In addition to organizing 189 clubs in the state which educated 2,700 members in person and an additional 5,500 members via the mail, Wray created a wartime program called "Uncle Sam's Saturday Service League," which organized participants to conduct Saturday afternoon work to increase food production in North Carolina.¹²⁸ Wray enrolled approximately 5,000 members in this weekend league, adding "nearly 2,500 days to the productive labor supply of the State" by an additional half day of work each week."¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Fleming to the North Carolina Council of Defense, 11 June 1918, Folder 5, Box 3, WWI 1.

¹²⁶ "Advisory Board Named. Food Administrator Appoints Special Organization for Negroes," *The Morning Star*, 17 Mar 1918, Folder 6, Box 10, WWI 2; James W. Clark, *Clover All Over: North Carolina 4-H in Action* (Raleigh, N.C.: North Carolina State University, 4-H & Youth, 1984), 37-48; B.W. Kilgore, *North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering, North Carolina Department of Agriculture, and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating, Agricultural Extension Service, Fourth Annual Report, Year Ended June 30, 1918* (Raleigh, N.C.: Commercial Printing Company, State Printers, 1919).

¹²⁷ North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College, 23rd Annual Catalogue of Negro A&T, pages 8, 28, <https://lib.digitalnc.org/record/34460?ln=en#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=114&r=0&xywh=-2041,0,6536,3971>, accessed 7 Feb 2022.

¹²⁸ Clark, *Clover All Over*, 18-19, 76.

¹²⁹ Kilgore, *Fourth Annual Report, Year Ended June 30, 1918*.

Wray also created a newspaper, the *Rural Messenger*, to communicate with state farmers and agricultural club members. Focusing on the organizing of young men and women for agricultural work, Wray wrote in 1917 that “they should engage in this work as a necessary defense for their country; that they could greatly assist by growing food to feed the boys who had gone to the trenches.”¹³⁰ As detailed by a Congressional remembrance of his work almost a century later, in 1918-1919 alone, Wray’s work with the Saturday Service League, “produced more than 17,000 chickens, 30,000 eggs, 23,000 pounds of pork, 700 bushels of wheat, 500 bushels of peas, 1,800 bushels of peanuts, 32 bales of cotton, 45,000 bushels of corn, and 700 bushels of potatoes.”¹³¹ This was a significant impact by Wray and those he was able to inspire to participate in food management during the war. Additionally, Wray, like many county agents during the war, was also employed to encourage other wartime support among Black North Carolinians. Wartime work that extended beyond normal agricultural advice included helping to sell Liberty Bonds and War Savings Stamps, raising money in support of the Red Cross and United War Work, and defusing white backlash from fears over German propaganda by preaching and encouraging outward loyalty by Black citizens.¹³²

Beyond the realm of food management, African Americans in the state supported the war through the purchase of Liberty Bonds or War Savings Stamps, including the invitation of leaders of the Black community by the North Carolina Council of Defense to conduct “a campaign among the negroes to induce them to purchase war savings certificates.”¹³³ One such man to support war financing among North Carolina’s Black communities was Dr. Aaron M. Moore, a medical doctor in Durham and one of the founders of the North Carolina Mutual and Provident

¹³⁰ Senator Michael Bennet (D-Colorado), “Remembering John D. Wray,” Congressional Record Proceedings and Debates of the 112th Congress, 2nd Session, vol. 158, no. 85 (Senate - June 07, 2012), page S3836, <https://www.congress.gov/112/crec/2012/06/07/CREC-2012-06-07-pt1-PgS3836.pdf>, accessed 7 Feb 2022.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Kilgore, *Fourth Annual Report, Year Ended June 30, 1918*.

¹³³ North Carolina Council of Defense, Meeting Minutes, 3 Dec 1917, Folder 13, Box 13, WWI 1.

Association which provided insurance to African Americans in the state.¹³⁴ Moore, through the Provident Association, purchased \$100,000 worth of Liberty Bonds in 1917 and 1918 and \$300,000 in War Savings Stamps, helping to sell them to other African Americans in the community, showing patriotism, as well as providing a sound investment for Black families that were generally poor in household wealth.¹³⁵ Throughout the war, however, the state Council was insistent that Moore and other African Americans in the state focus not on organizing themselves, but on simply selling the necessary financial instruments to raise the money needed for the war.¹³⁶ Those supporting the Council, they made clear, should leave any statewide communication to the Liberty Loan and War Savings committees, which were led by white men.¹³⁷

Moore also served as the supervisor of Negro economics for North Carolina, acting as a state link to a new division of the federal Labor Department established to help manage Black labor in the country. Moore was appointed to this position by Governor Bickett following a statewide meeting in Raleigh on 19 June 1918.¹³⁸ Recognizing the need to pre-empt federal intrusion in this socially and politically contentious area in North Carolina, state leaders weighed in to choose who would serve as the intermediary between the national government and the state. The most important item Bickett and the Council of Defense wanted addressed when it came to

¹³⁴ Blake Hill-Saya, *Aaron McDuffie Moore: An African American Physician, Educator, and Founder of Durham's Black Wall Street* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2020); Walter B. Weare, *Black Business in the New South: A Social History of the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993); Andrews R. McCants, *John Merrick: A Biographical Sketch* (Durham, N.C.: The Seeman Printery, 1920).

¹³⁵ Hulse, *Granville County in the World War*, 209; John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans* (New York, N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 471.

¹³⁶ North Carolina Council of Defense, Meeting Minutes, 3 Dec 1917, Folder 13, Box 13, WWI 1, 1.

¹³⁷ Fries to Grimes, 4 Jan 1918, and Grimes to Fries, 5 Jan 1918, Folder 396, Box 31, John Bryan Grimes Papers.

¹³⁸ U.S. Department of Labor, *The Negro at Work During the World War and During Reconstruction* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 97-104; Haley, *Charles N. Hunter*, 202; Henry P. Guzda, "Social Experiment of the Labor Department: The Division of Negro Economics," *The Public Historian* 4, no. 4 (1982): 7-37; Henry P. Guzda, "Labor Department's First Program to Assist Black Workers," *Monthly Labor Review* 105, no. 6 (June 1982): 39-44; Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*, 473. Charles Hunter had been attempting to lead Black labor issues in the state after he was fired from the state Food Administration, but did not get much traction with white leaders. Hunter to Ramsay, 25 May 1918, and Ramsay to Hunter, 7 Jun 1918, Hunter Papers; Haley, *Charles N. Hunter*, 199.

Black labor was the migration of African Americans from the state. As discussed in Chapter 3, Black citizens of North Carolina – and across the South – had been leaving the state for new opportunities since before the war. The movement of Black men and women created significant labor shortages, particularly among the cotton-producing counties that relied heavily upon Black labor, but overall affecting 87% of the state’s counties.¹³⁹ J.A. Taylor, a white merchant and land owner in Wilmington, captured this dynamic, writing to Bickett that “unless some practical plan is adopted to conserve the negro labor of the South the result will be exceedingly bad, perhaps calamitous, on the agricultural interests of this section.” Recognizing that “the supply of negro labor has been growing progressively acute for a number of years...[but] has been intensified since the outbreak of the European war.”¹⁴⁰ Taking it a step further, Taylor pushed for more direct control over Black labor, “since the negro is especially qualified and indispensably necessary to the success of Southern agriculture.”¹⁴¹ Taylor’s argument – and one many white leaders in the state also voiced – was that white elites should manage the movement and activities of Black citizens.¹⁴² In this formulation, the state, led by the Council of Defense, would prevent Black men and women from migrating, stop labor recruiters from coming into the state, and create vagrancy laws that forced Black men to work or be inducted into military service.

Dr. Moore, the Labor Department he worked for, and the national Council of Defense all pushed for more humane and, frankly, productive policies, including advising for the increased education for Black workers as a way to increase their productivity.¹⁴³ Moore and his office began a program of traveling the state to speak to Black workers about health and safety

¹³⁹ Emmet S. Scott, *Negro Migration During the War* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1920); Crow, et al, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina*, 132.

¹⁴⁰ Taylor to Bickett, 22 Jan 1918, Folder 5, P.C. 216.2; Rohn to Grimes, 1 Oct 1917, Folder 382, Box 30, John Bryan Grimes Papers; Grimes to Rohn, 4 Oct 1917, Folder 382, Box 30, John Bryan Grimes Papers.

¹⁴¹ Taylor to Bickett, 22 Jan 1918, Folder 5, P.C. 216.2.

¹⁴² Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy*, 19-20.

¹⁴³ Fleming to Scherer, 25 Mar 1918, Chamber of Commerce Report on “Economic Value of Negro Education,” Folder 5, Box 4, Scherer Papers.

concerns, techniques for efficiency, and even recreational activities – all designed to increase the morale and productivity of Black labor.¹⁴⁴ Moore, in support of the state representative for the U.S. Employment Service, established Black local community labor boards similar to such white boards, but under the supervision of the state Council of Defense and the U.S. Employment Service.¹⁴⁵ These boards were designed to provide information on local needs for labor in their areas, deficiencies in the welfare of workers, and support the increased efficiency of workers. In reality, these boards acted primarily as a mechanism for communication between the state mobilizers, such as the state Council of Defense, and Black workers. Moore was able to use the boards to call together meetings to communicate the information he received from the Council of Defense and the federal Labor Department. Additionally, the boards became an outlet for Black workers to voice their frustrations at working conditions, frequently preventing employer-employee or racial friction, while not actually addressing any of the concerns.

Conclusion

The participation of African Americans in the war effort – through military service, support to mobilizing soldiers, food conservation, labor management, and fundraising – was significantly stifled by the state Council, which went out of its way to prevent formal organization or inclusion at the state level. However, at the county and local level, the exclusion of Black men and women was less all-encompassing. Participation at these levels evolved over the course of the war to allow for much more organization and inclusion, particularly in areas considered non-threatening to the socio-political white supremacist order in the state.

¹⁴⁴ U.S. Department of Labor, *The Negro at Work During the World War and During Reconstruction*, 99-100.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 98-99.

Confronting the push on the part of the national Council of Defense and other federal agencies to organize and manage Black men and women, the North Carolina Council of Defense was able, through its intermediary position between the federal government and local citizens, to craft and enforce its own model for integrating African Americans into the war effort. This model followed a logic of racial inclusion and exclusion to incorporate token, white-chosen Black leaders to share information and divert federal criticism, while excluding the integration or organization of African Americans at the state level. Additionally, Hill and his Council instructed county and local officials how to handle the management of Black men and women in mobilization activities, basing such work around a similar, minimal consultation model that was used at the state level. This approach allowed the state Council to maintain social and political subordination and control over African Americans, deciding when, where, who, and how Black citizens could participate in the war.¹⁴⁶

In addition to the diminished capability such an approach created in mobilization activities in the state, the exclusion of African Americans from the war effort also took a demonstrable toll on the few men and women who are recorded as taking part in Council activities. George King, who was included by the New Hanover County Council of Defense to communicate with the county's Black communities, was continually rebuffed by Hill and the state Council from any support to work he did outside New Hanover.¹⁴⁷ When he determined his efforts were being stifled in 1918, he left the state to run a newspaper, *The Rural Messenger*, out of the Tuskegee Institute.¹⁴⁸ Charles Hunter, educator and aspiring organizer of Black

¹⁴⁶ Hill and the Council excluded African Americans even in official reporting, failing to mention any efforts conducted by Black men and women in the state in his final report, while claiming that "the Council has felt that it was here for any and all war service, and war service includes both the army in front and the people behind," North Carolina Council of Defense, *First Annual Report of the North Carolina Council of Defense, 1918* (Raleigh, N.C.: Commercial Printing Company, 1918), 19.

¹⁴⁷ Sprunt to Hill, 11 Feb 1918, and Hill to Sprunt, 12 Feb 1918, Folder 27, Box 9, WWI 2.

¹⁴⁸ Monroe N. Work, ed., *Negro Year Book: An Annual Encyclopedia of the Negro, 1921-1922* (Tuskegee, A.L.: The Negro Year Book Publishing Company, 1922), 423; Haley, *Charles N. Hunter*, 202-203.

mobilization activities, felt similarly excluded. Prevented from working on food conservation and ignored by those working on labor in the state, Hunter left North Carolina to take an unskilled labor position at the Norfolk, Virginia Navy Yards at the age of sixty-seven. Writing to John Paul Lucas of the state Food Administration, he said that “It seems that I could find no way of using myself in North Carolina so I came here.” Still, he felt he was “doing my bit and proud of the opportunity.”¹⁴⁹ Though remaining apprised of the politics and events in North Carolina, Hunter would remain outside of the state long after the war.¹⁵⁰ Others, like John Wray and Thomas Knight would remain in the state after the war, though Wray did move around as new agricultural teaching positions became available in the South before landing in Scotland County in south-central North Carolina to teach at the Laurinburg Normal and Industrial Institute.

In the eyes of the men running the North Carolina Council of Defense, racial exclusion did not hamper their ability to mobilize the state for war. In fact, despite exclusion, the nation did gain enough capability from the Council’s efforts in support of the war while the white political elites in the state were able to maintain the pre-war, white supremacist socio-political order. As Governor Bickett wrote to a Chicago paper in 1919 regarding the movement of Black men and women out of the South, “By inheritance, by association and by a sympathetic understanding of his virtues and his limitations, the Southern white people are the natural and consistent friends of the negro...[and] it is necessary for the protection, the progress and the happiness of both races for the government to be run by white people, and it is the unalterable determination of the whites to keep in their own hands the reins of government.”¹⁵¹ The state Council of Defense ensured that “unalterable determination” was enforced through the mobilization for the First World War.

¹⁴⁹ Haley, *Charles N. Hunter*, 203.

¹⁵⁰ Hunter to Daniels, 17 Jul 1919, and Hunter to Dudley, 27 Dec 1920, Hunter Papers; Haley, *Charles N. Hunter*, 203-234.

¹⁵¹ Thomas Bickett, “Negro Emigration,” *Raleigh News and Observer*, 4 August 1919, in Santford and House, *Public Letters and Papers of Thomas Walter Bickett*, 291-292.

Conclusion:

“Accomplishing Vastly More Than We Ourselves Believed We Could”: Assessing the Impact of the North Carolina Council of Defense in the First World War¹

In his speech in Congress requesting a declaration of war in April 1917, President Woodrow Wilson laid out the challenges of mobilization. The first order of business was “rapidly putting our navy upon an efficient war footing and...create and equip a great army.”² According to Wilson, however, the biggest challenge was the broader mobilization of national resources that would be required to equip, feed, clothe, train, transport, and sustain those forces for war. According to Wilson, “our industries, on the farms, in the shipyards, in the mines, in the factories, must be made more prolific and more efficient than ever and that they must be more economically managed and better adapted to the particular requirements of our task than they have been.”³ Instead of centralizing the war effort, however, Wilson was clear that the mechanisms of formal governance would be used in support of American society and its inherent infrastructural power, stating that “The Government of the United States and the governments of the several States stand ready to cooperate.”⁴

This dissertation has argued that the underlying dynamics of the early twentieth century American state shaped the ways in which Wilson, and indeed leaders at all levels of governance

¹ Thomas W. Bickett, “A Debt of Honor,” in Santford Martin and R.B. House, eds., *Public Letters and Papers of Thomas Walter Bickett, Governor of North Carolina, 1917-1921*. (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1923), 203.

² Woodrow Wilson, “Wilson’s Address to his Fellow-Countrymen on Ways to Serve the Nation during the War,” in Albert Shaw, ed., *The Messages and Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (New York, N.Y.: G.H. Doran, 1924), 387.

³ *Ibid.*, 389.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 390.

in the United States, structured the mobilization for the First World War in the way that they did. The proliferation of federal-level emergency agencies, the ubiquitous decentralization across all functions of the mobilization, and the integration of private enterprise and organized society into wartime activities reflected the organizing principles of the existing American associational order. Central to this associational order for wartime mobilization were the individual states, particularly in the coordination of public-private cooperation.⁵ A Council of Defense System was established at the outset of the war to link together mobilization in the states and the federal government. In each state a Council of Defense was established, creating the key intermediary institution that managed the public, private, and individual efforts for mobilization.

I have analyzed the creation, structure, and impact of the North Carolina Council of Defense to explore the broader dynamics of social and political power in the American associational warfare state during the First World War. I have argued that while the mobilization for the First World War was driven by national requirements and resulted in the extension of federal power, state and local elites exerted significant influence and control over events on the ground. The preferences and perceived benefits of the men leading the state Council of Defense dictated where and how federal and state capabilities increased, as well as in what areas the state refused to cede power to the federal government. The wartime associational state, I have also shown, engaged in a particular politics of inclusion and exclusion, dictating who could participate in mobilization and where they would be allowed to do so. In North Carolina, this politics of inclusion and exclusion was employed based on class, gender, and racial lines, driven by the

⁵ Elisabeth Stephanie Clemens, *Civic Gifts: Voluntarism and the Making of the American Nation-State* (Chicago, I.L.: University of Chicago Press, 2020); Brian Balogh, *The Associational State: American Governance in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia, P.A.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); Gary Gerstle, *Liberty and Coercion: The Paradox of American Government from the Founding to the Present* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2015); Julia Irwin, *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation's Humanitarian Awakening* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2013); Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, vol. 3 (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2008).

tenets of southern Progressivism and the imperatives of the state's patriarchal, white-supremacist socio-political order. The North Carolina Council of Defense was successful in its dual purpose: it increased the capability of the state to support the nation for war and it prevented any challenges to the extant hierarchies of power in the state.

After the war, the Governor of North Carolina, Thomas W. Bickett, heaped praise on the men and women of the state for the work done during the war. "[T]here looms up one incontrovertible, indestructible, and colossal fact," Bickett declared a year after the war concluded, "during the year 1918 the American army and the American people accomplished vastly more than our enemies dreamed we could, and vastly more than our friends hoped we could, and vastly more than we ourselves believed we could."⁶ Indeed, the American military, created and sustained by a robust home front mobilization effort by states like North Carolina, helped to turn the tide in Europe, defeating Germany and its allies. Mobilization organizations of the United States, especially the state Councils of Defense, dramatically enhanced the military power of the nation and its deployment in Europe, resulting in Allied military victory in November 1918.

Would the continuation of the war beyond 1918, and the inevitable continued expansion of the mobilization to support it, have led to increased centralization at the federal level?⁷ It is evident that by November 1918 there were moves toward centralized policymaking and guidance by federal agencies. This likely would have continued into 1919, creating a greater delineation of

⁶ Thomas W. Bickett, "A Debt of Honor," 203.

⁷ Many historians of the mobilization of the First World War believe the trends were all toward federal centralization into the fall of 1918. See, for instance, Geoffrey Wawro, *Sons of Freedom: The Forgotten American Soldiers Who Defeated Germany in World War I* (New York, N.Y.: Basic Books, 2018); and Richard Shawn Faulkner, *The School of Hard Knocks: Combat Leadership in the American Expeditionary Forces* (College Station, T.X.: Texas A&M University Press, 2012); David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1982); and Robert D. Cuff, *The War Industries Board: Business-Government Relations during World War I* (Baltimore, M.D.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

roles between the federal agencies and the mobilization organizations in the states.⁸ A continued mobilization into 1919 would likely have resulted in federal agencies – such as the Council of National Defense, the Food Administration, the Fuel Administration, and the War Industries Board – evolving further into policymaking organizations that provided political, economic, and strategic guidance to the states, while state Councils of Defense coordinated activities, manpower (and “woman power”), and resources based on a negotiation of federal guidance and their internal socio-political needs. This was exactly what occurred from 1917-1918, and likely would have remained the case had the war continued.

Additionally, the American wartime associational state contained untapped capability by the end of the war that remained available to a more coordinated mobilization effort. Unlike the belligerents in Europe, the United States was a late arrival to the war and the nation still possessed manpower and resources not fully employed to wartime needs. Whereas the United Kingdom, France, and Germany had largely expended their mobilization potential, the United States had room to grow. The existence of untapped capability was perhaps most evident in the realm of military manpower. The United Kingdom placed roughly 12% of its national population under arms, mobilizing 5.2 million soldiers from its 43 million total population.⁹ France mobilized 20% of its national population, putting 7.9 million men in uniform out of its 39.6 million citizens.¹⁰ Germany called forth 21% of its 63.5 million citizens, placing 13 million under

⁸ See, for instance, the move by the War Industries Board to use the state Councils of Defense to manage and approve any new construction in the fall of 1918, War Industrial Board to the North Carolina Council of Defense, 28 Sep 1918, Folder 8, Box 3, WWI 1; Meeting notes from 11 Nov 1918, Folder 2, Box 4, WWI 1.

⁹ Stephen Badsey, “Great Britain,” in Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, eds., *1914-1918 Online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War* (Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin, 2017), https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/great_britain, accessed 2 Mar 2022. Overall population numbers come from 1911.

¹⁰ Nicolas Beaupré, “France,” in Ute Daniel, et al, *1914-1918 Online*. Overall population numbers come from 1911.

arms.¹¹ All of these three belligerent nations mobilized between 50-70% of its available military aged men.¹² In comparison, by the end of the war the United States had only placed approximately 4 million men in uniform out of a total population of 104 million, a mere 4% of the population. In North Carolina alone, the state Council of Defense only put under arms about 80,000 of its 31.5 million citizens, a mere 0.3% of its population and about 16% of its military aged men.¹³ In short, there was plenty of military manpower capability left in the United States, as well as in North Carolina itself.

Still, in my view, continued evolution of the American warfare state into 1919 would have nonetheless been built on what already existed. Coordination among differing levels of governance and the integration of public and private efforts according to the associational state would have continued. All the mechanisms and relationships, developed over the previous eighteen months of wartime mobilization, were present for continued improvement. Instead of undertaking politically challenging and manpower-intensive shifts toward federal centralization, the mobilization would have remained state-centered.

The power of the state level in the mobilization from 1917-1918 was its flexibility, allowing for a politically acceptable negotiation between federal and state levels on mobilization issues. An extended mobilization into 1919 would also leverage the flexibility of a state-centered mobilization, allowing for shifts in emphasis and priorities according to that federal-state negotiation. However, it is likely that an extension of the war would have exerted greater pressure on areas that state leaders fought against up until the fall of 1918. Primary among these were calls for the greater integration and inclusion of women and African Americans into mobilization

¹¹ Gerhard Hirschfeld, "Germany," in Ute Daniel, et al, *1914-1918 Online*. Overall population numbers come from 1911.

¹² In the case of European nations in the First World War, military aged men were generally between the ages of 18 and 60.

¹³ The overall population numbers are based on the 1910 Census, Department of Commerce Bureau of Statistics, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year of 1910: Statistics for North Carolina* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1914), Table 7, p. 592.

activities and, more importantly (and dangerously according to the thinking of the leaders of the North Carolina Council of Defense) coordinating and organizing wartime work by and amongst their own communities. For example, Laura Reilley of the North Carolina Woman's Committee and D.H. Hill of the state Council of Defense each made moves, under pressure from the federal government, to include at least token Black participation at the state level in late 1918.¹⁴ These were promises neither Reilley nor Hill ended up having to keep due to the end of the war. Had hostilities continued in earnest into 1919, it is likely that federal pressure and the need for more manpower to support mobilization activities would have led to greater inclusion of all communities at the state level.

The American associational warfare state, particularly the Council of Defense System, was a successful way to leverage the productive powers and energies of the American nation, versus solely centralizing and increasing the use of what Michael Mann termed "despotic power" by the federal government.¹⁵ As William Novak has pointed out, the American state is inherently strong *because* of its ability to leverage great infrastructural power for common ends.¹⁶ The nation's infrastructural power capitalized on the United States' large land mass with vast resources, a large population, and generally cooperative and energetic communities tied together by private organizations and interest groups. President Wilson, Secretary of War Baker, and the men and women of the Council of Defense System realized that the decentralization of the American state was more than simply a political challenge. America's decentralized system was

¹⁴ William J. Breen, "Black Women and the Great War: Mobilization and Reform in the South," *Journal of Southern History* 44, no. 3 (1978): 426; Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 195; Hill to African American leaders, 12 Oct 1918, Folder 7, Box 13, WWI 1.

¹⁵ Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*. Mann defines the exercise of despotic power as "a state that has a degree of authoritative 'power over' society...They can command anything they like of their citizens," 13.

¹⁶ William J. Novak, *The People's Welfare: Law and Regulation in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 9-13; William J. Novak, "The Myth of the 'Weak' American State," *American Historical Review* 113, no. 3 (June 2008): 752-772.

an opportunity to incorporate and tie together the nation through an associational warfare state that allowed citizens to both apply their interests and skills where they could, but also challenged them to rise to the moment for a common purpose.

Continued reliance on the Council System in particular, and the associational order in general, would also have been fully compatible with an increased emphasis on coercion in mobilization activities, which was already in the making in 1918. Many state Councils of Defense followed such a turn, focusing more on “vigilance,” and by the end of the war “vigilantism,” using the terminology of Chris Capozzola, than on coordinating state mobilization activities.¹⁷ Many Councils essentially became propaganda machines that used coercion – to the point of force – to ensure compliance and reduce pushback against state mobilization activities.¹⁸ An example of this can be seen in the time and effort all levels of the Council of Defense System placed in the creation of community councils of defense, which according to North Carolina Council of Defense Joseph Hyde Pratt, were “the work shops [sic] where patriotism would be turned into war action, war protection and war conservation; and thus would be obtained mass action, developed through freely willed team play.”¹⁹ While these community councils did not gain significant traction by the end of the war, it displays at least one avenue leaders of the mobilization could have expanded to address the need for greater participation, coercion, and integration to provide an increase in scale to support a continued war through the associational state.

¹⁷ Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2008), 118-119.

¹⁸ Oklahoma’s Council of Defense is the most salient example of an organization founded upon and focused on the enforcement of loyalty and snit-sedition. William J. Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home: Civilian Mobilization, Wartime Federalism, and the Council of National Defense, 1917-1919* (Westport, C.T.: Greenwood Press, 1984), 84.

¹⁹ Joseph Hyde Pratt, “History of the North Carolina Council of Defense,” vol. 1, p. 71, unpublished, circa 1932, Folder 1, Box 1, WWI 1.

It is possible, even if the mobilization was not centralized at the federal level, that the states themselves could have increasingly relied upon despotic power at their level to enforce additional mobilization requirements.²⁰ The move toward increase coercion was even seen in North Carolina, whose Council generally attempted to prevent too much disruption to citizens' lives or threaten the state's socio-political environment by overtly exercising power itself. By 1918, the state Council increasingly pressed county Councils and municipal governments to pass ordinances concerning vagrancy.²¹ Seen as a solution to shortages in agricultural labor in the state, they also supported the War Department's "Work or Fight" order. Such coercive measures would likely have multiplied into 1919 if the war had continued, given the additional requirements for manpower – military, industrial, and agricultural – and resources that would have resulted.

As detailed in the previous chapters, the Council of Defense System was quickly dismantled following the Armistice with Germany in November 1918. This was largely due to the ad hoc nature of the system, as well as the national and local rhetoric about the war that emphasized its emergency – and therefore temporary – nature. From the entry of the United States into the war until Armistice, political leaders frequently entreated citizens to set aside daily life to rise to the occasion of the temporary emergency. The result was that as the war concluded citizens wanted to quickly retreat from the sacrifice required for the home front mobilization. Even efforts by some in the federal and state governments to transition from mobilization to

²⁰ Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, 13.

²¹ Meeting Notes, 29 Jun 1918, Folder 13, Box 13, WWI 1; Bickett to Mayors and City Commissioners, 4 Mar 1918, Folder 8, Box 11, WWI 1; Hill to Mayors, 6 Aug 1918, Folder 11, Box 8, WWI 1; Hill to Asheville Council of Defense, 9 Aug 1918, Folder 1, Box 12, WWI 1.

“reconstruction,” detailed in Chapter 3, came to naught as the entire nation turned the page on the war over the winter of 1918-1919.²²

The Council of Defense System was briefly revived in 1940 as the United States prepared for possible entry into another global war, this time perpetrated by the Nazi German and Imperial Japanese governments.²³ The primary reason for relying once again upon the Councils was the same as in 1917: the need for military manpower. In September 1940, Congress passed the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, instituting America’s first peacetime draft.²⁴ The Council System fell away, however, as the War Department took greater control of the draft system throughout the nation, as well as the ability of the Franklin Roosevelt Administration to better incorporate business, political, and labor elites into the pre-war mobilization effort following a decade of federal centralization under the New Deal.²⁵ Subsequent federal centralization of military mobilization – particularly following the institution of an All-Volunteer Force in the U.S. military in 1973 – completed the centralization trend that began in the First World War with the Selective Service Act. Every war since has depended more upon federal centralization than decentralized power to the states.

While the last century of American wars is evident of increasing centralization in mobilization, the American penchant to leverage the associational state for national mobilization

²² Hill to Talbot, 5 Mar 1919, Folder 6, Box 4, WWI 1; Turner to Pratt, 27 Dec 1929, Folder 12, Box 19, WWI 1; Parker to Pratt, 6 Jul 1933, Folder 13, Box 19, WWI 1.

²³ RG 62.1, NARA; Mark A. Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance, and U.S. Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 32-37.

²⁴ United States, Congress, Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, 16 Sep 1940, Public Law 76-783, 54 Stat. 885, 76th Congress, 3rd Session, https://heinonline-org.proxy.lib.duke.edu/HOL/Page?collection=statute&handle=hein.statute/sal054&id=922&men_tab=srchr results, accessed 4 Mar 2022.

²⁵ This was partly due to governmental backlash to the associationalism that Herbert Hoover instituted, and many felt helped create the Great Depression. See Ellis W. Hawley, “Herbert Hoover, the Commerce Secretariat, and the Vision of an ‘Associative State,’” *Journal of American History* 61, no. 1 (June 1974): 116-40 and Hawley, *The New Deal and the Problem of Monopoly: A Study in Economic Ambivalence* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1995). The best recent book on the mobilization for the Second World War is Mark Wilson, *Destructive Creation: American Business and the Winning of World War II, American Business, Politics, and Society* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

can be seen throughout the twentieth century, as Brian Balogh has reminded us.²⁶ Most recently, the employment of the associational state for national mobilization can be seen in the American response to the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID) pandemic from 2020 to the present day.²⁷ From state governments enacting their own COVID planning committees, to private groups developing best practices, to women's groups sewing cloth masks, the COVID response was inherently one based upon the associational state model.²⁸ Whether scholars will ultimately deem the response to COVID an effective or efficient national mobilization, the integration of public and private efforts at the local and state level, designed to enhance the capability of the federal government to address a national crisis, is the most recent example of America's ability to mobilize its people and resources according to the associational state model.

²⁶ Balogh, *The Associational State*, 200-221.

²⁷ Giliberto Capano, et al., "Mobilizing Policy (In)Capacity to Fight COVID-19: Understanding Variations in State Responses," *Policy and Society* 39, no. 3 (September 1, 2020): 285–308.

²⁸ National League of Cities, "COVID-19 Local Response Principles," 7 Mar 2020, <https://www.nlc.org/resource/covid-19-local-response-principles/>, accessed 4 Mar 2022; Anna North, "The 'Women's Work' of the Pandemic," *Vox*, 30 Apr 2020, <https://www.vox.com/2020/4/30/21238454/coronavirus-face-mask-cooking-women-covid-pandemic>, accessed 4 Mar 2022.

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Biography

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