

Military Collection
State Archives of North Carolina

North Carolina USO Clubs Records (WWII 6)
[World War II]

Collection Number: WWII 6

Title: North Carolina USO Clubs Records

Dates: 1941-1948, undated

Creator: United Services Organizations; various individuals

Abstract

The North Carolina USO Clubs Records is composed of compiled club histories, pamphlets, booklets, photographs, newsletters, and publications relating to the United Services Organizations' (USO) operation in North Carolina and the United States during World War II. The bulk of the collection contains compiled histories of a select number of USO clubs in North Carolina towns and cities during the war. Due to the numerous military bases in North Carolina, USO clubs were an important part of the war effort in the state, offering service individuals safe recreation while stationed at North Carolina military sites. The compiled histories give the operation dates of the clubs, individuals involved in operating the clubs, photographs of activities at the clubs, and reports on events and programming held or sponsored by the clubs.

During World War II, North Carolina hosted 103 USO Clubs in 47 different communities. In their down time, U.S. service individuals would travel to nearby USO Clubs to dance, write letters, interact with other service individuals, watch films, and watch musical shows put on by the various clubs. Many women on the home front participated in the war effort by volunteering to work at USO clubs as club hostesses and junior hostesses. The collection documents the roles of women in the North Carolina USO clubs covered within the collection. The collection also documents the activities and operation of African-American USO clubs in cities such as Fayetteville and Raleigh during WWII. The collection's records were compiled and donated to the State Archives of North Carolina at the end of WWII, as part of the North Carolina Historical Commission's war records collection effort, to document all aspects of WWII in relation to North Carolina and its citizens.

Physical Description: 1.0 linear feet

Language(s): English

Repository

State Archives of North Carolina, 4614 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-4614

Restrictions on Access: There are no restrictions on accessing this collection.

Restrictions on Use

Some of the items within this collection are copyrighted, and the copyright is not owned by the State Archives of North Carolina. The restrictions related to copyright of the materials is governed by Title 17 of the U.S. Copyright Law. Researchers are responsible for obtaining permission from the copyright holder(s) to use materials beyond the “fair use” clause of the U.S. Copyright Law.

Preferred Citation

[Item name or title], [Box Number], Folder Numbers], North Carolina USO Clubs Records, WWII 6, WWII Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C.

Acquisition

The collection was acquired between 1946 and 1948, as listed in the 1946-1948 North Carolina Department of Archives and History Biennial Report. The USO records were donated to the State Archives by Alyce Lee Penick, USO’s Richmond Regional Office Secretary, as part of an agreement to deposit North Carolina historical wartime materials for the state’s war records collection project. The entry in the 1946-1948 Biennial Report reads: “U. S. O. activities in North Carolina towns during World War II. About ½ cubic foot. Given by Miss Alyce Lee Penick, Regional Office Secretary, U.S.O. 639 Central National Bank Building, Richmond 19, Virginia.”

The records in this collection were collected under the funding appropriations authorized for the World War II state records collection project in the 1943 North Carolina General Assembly. In his regular message to the General Assembly, North Carolina Governor J. Melville Broughton specifically requested that the war records program receive the financial support. The requested appropriation was made and became available to the Historical Commission from the General Assembly on July 1, 1943, under Senate Bill 11 (1943), Chapter 530. The collection of these wartime records by the North Carolina Department of Archives and History was authorized through Section 5i of Senate Bill 154, Chapter 706, “An Act Conferring Emergency War Powers on the Governor. . . .”

Related Material

Floor Plan, Furnishing Layout U.S.O. Club, Manteo, N.C. (circa 1940), 33GRF-0-35, Outer Banks History Center, Manteo, N.C., State Archives of North Carolina

Exterior View of United Service Organizations Club (USO), Rockingham, (Richmond County) North Carolina (circa 1940), N.2000.7.150, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh

USO Club Scrapbook (Dillard Street Club, Durham, N.C.), North Carolina Collection, Durham County Library, Durham, N.C.

United Service Organizations (U.S.) Service Club (Jacksonville, N.C.) visitor book, 1945-1947, 05334-z, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, N.C.

Processing Information

The materials in this collection were originally organized into three series, based on content. The series were as follows Series I: National; Series II: North Carolina: Historical record of U.S.O. clubs; and Series III: Other States: Richmond, Virginia. Items were subsequently arranged alphabetically by title of the materials or name of the city having the USO club in each series.

This collection was reprocessed in 2016 to make the materials more discoverable through improved description. Items were re-folded depending on the items' condition and preservation needs. The compiled history for Fayetteville: Seabrook Road USO club was in a metal bound scrapbook which had begun to rust on the papers and photographs included in the compiled history. The original binding was removed from the Seabrook Road history, and the compiled history was placed into acid-free file folders to improve preservation while maintaining the original order of the pages in the compiled history.

Materials located in Box 1, Folder 31, detail a dance put on by the by the Raleigh S. Salisbury Street USO Club at Camp Butner in 1943. These materials were originally stored in the WWII Papers in a collection artificially titled in 1964 when the collection was processed as "Series IV: Camp Publications, Diaries, and Other Publications" in the WWII Papers. The Camp Butner dance materials came in to the State Archives as part of its war records collection project around the same time as the USO clubs' materials. Since the Camp Butner materials were not military camp publications, they were removed from that collection in order to preserve historical context of the USO clubs' operations in North Carolina, and added to WWII 6 North Carolina USO Clubs Records.

Processed by: Rebecca Mullins; Matthew M. Peek, June 2016.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in three series based on geography in relation to North Carolina, and is further arranged within each series based on the subject material of the items. Series are as follows:

Series I: North Carolina USO Clubs Records

Series II: Richmond, Virginia, USO Club Materials

Series III: National USO Records

Historical Note

Prior the United States' entrance into World War II in 1941, the state of North Carolina had some advocating in favor of a war records program to help document the world's engagement in this major event. No formal records collection program was begun until after December 1941. In February 1942, at the first meeting of the newly-reconstituted North Carolina Historical Commission, North Carolina Governor J. Melville Broughton stressed the importance of preserving the records of the state's part what they termed the "greatest of all wars." The governor requested the Historical Commission to undertake such a records collection program through the Department of Archives and History. The Commission instructed their chairman and secretary to make a study of the possibilities of conducting such a program, and to formulate methods of procedure for a statewide program. The chairman and secretary immediately set to work and drew up a plan, which was approved by all members of the North Carolina Historical Commission and presented to Governor Broughton.

While no special appropriation was made by the North Carolina General Assembly for this purpose then, the Historical Commission—by making readjustments in its staffing—was able to employ a full-time person to begin the collection of World War II records from around the state. In preparing its 1943-1945 biennial budget, the Historical Commission included the salary of an additional employee for the work, together with funds to cover travel, postage for sending and receiving materials, and other necessary expenses for the war records collection program.

The Historical Commission's proposals received the support of the governor, and were approved by the Advisory Budget Commission in its recommendations to the 1943 North Carolina General Assembly. In his regular message to the General Assembly, Governor Broughton specifically requested that the war records program receive adequate support. The requested appropriation was made and became available to the Historical Commission from the General Assembly on July 1, 1943. In the meantime, the Historical Commission had employed Elmer D. Johnson, formerly of the staff of the University of North Carolina's Library (now Wilson Library), on October 1, 1942. Johnson was assigned to work under the direction of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History's secretary, and was given the title of Collector of Records.

Elmer Johnson found that the first thing necessary was to plan the war records collection work in detail. He made a study of what other states had accomplished in this field during World War I, and had begun to do at the start of World War II. Johnson corresponded with leaders in this work throughout the nation; made a study of the North Carolina's World War I collection; and in general sought to obtain all possible information and advice in laying the ground work for the World War II records collection program. Sometime earlier there had been set up a state Committee on Conservation of Cultural Resources, with the Department of Archives and History's secretary serving as chairman. This committee was asked to serve in an advisory capacity in connection with North Carolina's war records program.

A meeting of the Committee, which consisted of leading librarians, archivists, historians, sociologists, and others in a position to advise, was held in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, on November 12, 1942. Former World War I records collector for North Carolina, Robert B. House,

described his experiences and accomplishments in WWI, and various aspects of the proposed WWII records program were discussed.

The Committee on Conservation agreed that the WWII records collecting should be on as broad a basis as possible, and that it would be wisest to collect everything practicable relating to the war and North Carolina. Later it was felt that materials having no value as part of the collection could be discarded; the thinking was that it would be better to collect too much than too little, and miss the opportunity to preserve an important aspect of the war's history. The North Carolina Department of Archives and History's Chapel Hill conference was of great value in outlining the broad principles to be followed later in carrying out the records collection program. Early in December 1942, the North Carolina Office of Civilian Defense agreed to cooperate with the Department in this work. Elmer Johnson, while keeping his office in the Department quarters and continuing to hold the title of Collector of Records there, was also named Coordinator of War Records for the North Carolina Office of Civilian Defense.

According to the procedure which had been decided upon, the North Carolina county defense council chairmen appointed individuals within each county to serve as the county's collector of war records. In a number of the larger counties, assistant war records collectors were asked to handle various phases of the work or to cover different parts of the county. The program received the cordial support of the North Carolina Director of Civilian Defense, Robert L. McMillan, together with his office staff and field representatives.

The war records campaign received the endorsement of many statewide and local organizations, including the following: North Carolina Society of County Historians; North Carolina Library Association; North Carolina Press Association; State Literary and Historical Association; North Carolina Society for the Preservation of Antiquities; Garden Clubs of North Carolina; North Carolina Federation of Home Demonstration Clubs; State Federation of Music Clubs; Lions Clubs of North Carolina; North Carolina Congress of Parents and Teachers; North Carolina Department of the American Legion; Institute of Government; North Carolina Commission on Interracial Co-operation; Society of Mayflower Descendants; and the North Carolina Society of the Sons of the American Revolution.

On the local level, assistance was obtained for the state's war records collection program from community chambers of commerce, civic clubs, patriotic chapters, and teachers' and other organizations. It was recognized at the beginning that there were certain records which could not be included in such a collection—at least not at during the war's operation. The records of various federal, state, and local governmental agencies were in most cases a part of the regular official records series of these agencies. These records could not be transferred to any such public records collection program for the war, until the materials were no longer required for daily operations of the war effort.

On February 15, 1943, Charlie Huss, who had formerly held an administrative position with the Work Projects Administration and also the Federal Works Agency in North Carolina, was employed as Elmer Johnson's successor as Collector of Records. She was given the title of Collector of Records for the Historical Commission, and Assistant Coordinator of State Department of Archives and History War Records for the Office of Civilian Defense (with the

secretary of the Commission now serving as Coordinator of War Records for the Office of Civilian Defense). Huss saw clearly that it would be impossible to direct a properly conducted program from a desk in the state capital of North Carolina. She believed that it was essential to visit the various counties in order to make sure that the local programs were properly inaugurated and handled. Huss began immediately upon starting her position to make trips to different parts of the state, usually visiting several counties on each trip. At first, she traveled by public carrier, but this proved too difficult and so wasteful of her time that the necessary arrangements were made for her to travel by automobile. It was realized that it would be impossible to secure complete records from all the state's one hundred counties. Since the work was entirely voluntary, with no compensation whatsoever to those at the county level, it was obvious that in some counties an enthusiastic response would be obtained, while in others little or nothing would be done. At the beginning, an attempt was made to launch a program in every county, but later attention tended to be concentrated on those counties which had shown their willingness to cooperate with the North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

While such a plan left something to be desired in that the war records collection would not be complete, it was impracticable to carry on an active campaign in every North Carolina county. An effort was made, however, to see that the work was actively conducted in at least one county in every major section of the state: the Tidewater, the bright leaf tobacco belt, the cotton-growing counties, the Piedmont manufacturing area, and the mountain district. Likewise, Charlie Huss undertook to cover certain key counties where particularly important war activities were being carried on. In July 1943, the additional funds appropriated by the North Carolina legislature became available. Nell Hines, formerly a teacher of history with a master's degree in history from Columbia University, was employed to assist in the North Carolina war records collection program.

This made it possible for Huss to spend a large part of her time in the field, and by the end of 1945, she had visited 85 counties and towns in every part of North Carolina. Huss held conferences with local collectors and their assistants, setting up committees, arranging group meetings, addressing various gatherings, enlisting the co-operation of the local newspapers, and arousing public interest in the work.

The records of African-American communities, military personnel, schools, businesses, universities and colleges, and other groups, in North Carolina (which constituted 27% of the state's total population during WWII) did not receive sufficient attention in most localities from the local populations in regards to records collection program. A special arrangement was made late in 1943 between the North Carolina Department of Archives and History with Dr. John Hope Franklin, of the then North Carolina College for Negroes' Department of History in Durham, North Carolina (present-day North Carolina Central University), in which Dr. Franklin agreed to head the program for the collection of North Carolina's African-American war records for the state.

The United Services Organizations (USO) was established on February 4, 1941, at the recommendation of U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, to provide entertainment and recreation for soldiers away from home. Established as a private non-profit, volunteer organization, the USO at its height in 1944 operated 3,035 clubs and canteens across the United

States. The USO was comprised of six separate organizations: The Salvation Army; Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA); Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA); the National Catholic Community Services (NCCS); the National Traveler's Aid Association; and the Jewish Welfare Board (JWB). The six organizations would be charged with running each club by recruiting volunteers, while the military provided building supplies, locations and labor when needed. Many clubs were housed in YMCA buildings or in community centers in portions of the pre-existing buildings.

Due to the numerous military bases in North Carolina in WWII, the USO was an important part of the war effort. During World War II, North Carolina hosted 103 USO clubs in 47 different communities. In their down time, U.S. soldiers would travel to nearby USO clubs to dance, write letters, and watch shows put on by the club. Many women participated in the war effort by volunteering to help at USO clubs as hostesses and junior hostesses, dancing with the men, serving food, putting on event programming, and serving in various other capacities. At the conclusion of WWII, as part of the war records collection effort of the State Archives of North Carolina, various clubs sent their operational records and compiled histories to the State Archives.

Scope and Content

The collection contains compiled histories, pamphlets, booklets, dance records, photographs, newsletters, and publications relating to operation of various USO clubs and the national USO during World War II. The bulk of the collection contains compiled histories of various USO clubs in North Carolina, arranged in alphabetical order by name of the town or city in which the club was found. The collection is arranged into three series based on the materials. The series are as follows: Series I: North Carolina USO Clubs Records; Series II: Richmond, Virginia: USO Club Materials; and Series III: National USO Records.

Subject Terms

Corporate Names

United Service Organizations (U.S.)

Places

Aberdeen (N.C.)
Atlantic (N.C.)
Beaufort (N.C.)
Carolina Beach (N.C.)
Durham (N.C.)
Edenton (N.C.)
Fayetteville (N.C.)
Goldsboro (N.C.)
Greensboro (N.C.)
Hamlet (N.C.)

Hertford (N.C.)
Kinston (N.C.)
Laurinburg (N.C.)
Monroe (N.C.)
Maxton (N.C.)
Raleigh (N.C.)
Richmond, Virginia
Rockingham (N.C.)
Spring Lake (N.C.)
Southport (N.C.)

Subject—Topical

United Service Organizations (U.S.)
World War, 1939-1945--North Carolina
World War, 1939-1945--United States

Material Types

Administrative Records
Booklets
Correspondence
Newsletter
Pamphlets
Publications

Collection Inventory

Series I: North Carolina USO Clubs Records

Series I contains USO Club Records for various locations in North Carolina. Some cities housed more than one USO club, depending on the need of the community. Unique to this collection is a Junior Hostess Rulebook from the S. Bloodworth Street USO club in Raleigh, North Carolina, which details how a USO Junior Hostess had to behave and interact with soldiers. The Rulebook also presented to young women and girls the USO dress code and work hour regulations (see Box 1, Folder 30).

Another item of interest in the series is the compiled history for the Seabrook Road USO club in Fayetteville, North Carolina. The compiled history contains photographs detailing different events the USO club hosted, as well as event pamphlets and meeting minutes. While the Seabrook Road USO club served mostly the African-American community and contains many details of that community's operation of the club, their records indicate they sought to bring "a better understanding, better relationship and cooperation for harmonious working regardless of race, creed, or color." The Seabrook Road USO club attempted to unite the community regardless of religion or race during a time of war.

Series I also contains records from a dance put on at Camp Butner (in present-day Butner, N.C., northeast of Durham, North Carolina) in February 1943 by the Raleigh, N.C., South Salisbury Street USO Club. Essentially, the South Salisbury Street USO Club brought the USO to the camp. The Camp Butner records contain blank hostess invitations; small cards containing all of this dance's hostesses' names and addresses; and contains information on chaperones assigned to each of the female hostesses for the Camp Butner dance (see Box 1, Folder 31).

Series I is organized alphabetically by the name of the North Carolina town or city in which the club was located. If more than one USO club was located within a town or city, then the clubs are organized within the town or city by alphabetical order of the name of the club (usually named after the street on which the club was located)

Box/Folder	Description	Date
1/1	Aberdeen USO Club: Compiled Club History	April 1945
1/2	Aberdeen USO Club: Volunteer Service Roll	March 1943- May 1946
1/3	Atlantic USO Club: Compiled Club History	June 1945
1/4	Beaufort USO Club: Compiled Club History	June 1945, December 1945
1/5	Carolina Beach USO Club: Compiled Club History	May 1945
1/6	Durham: Fayetteville Street USO Club—Compiled Club History	April 1945
1/7	Durham: Fayetteville Street USO Club—Club Closing Records	March 1946
1/8	Durham: Morris Street USO Club—Compiled Club History	April 1945
1/9	Durham: Morris Street USO Club—Club Closing Records	April 1946
1/10	Edenton: North Broad Street USO Club—Compiled Club History	May 1945 August 1946
1/11	Edenton: North Oakum Street USO Club Extension—Compiled Club History	February 1946- August 1946
1/12	Fayetteville: Seabrook Road USO Club—Administrative Records	October 1945

1/13	Fayetteville: Seabrook Road USO Club— Compiled Club History (Part 1)	April 1946
1/14	Fayetteville: Seabrook Road USO Club— Compiled Club History (Part 2)	April 1946
1/15	Goldsboro: North William Street USO Club— Compiled Club History	January 1946, November 1945
1/16	Goldsboro: Walnut Street USO Club Extension— Club Closing Records	November 1945
1/17	Greensboro: East Market Street—Compiled Club History	May 1945
1/18	Greensboro: Elm Street USO Club—Compiled Club History	May 1945
1/19	Hamlet USO Club: Compiled Club History	April 1945
1/20	Hertford USO Club: Compiled Club History	April 1945, November 1945
1/21	Kinston: McLewean Street USO Club— Compiled Club History	April 1945, July 1946
1/22	Kinston: East Bright Street USO Club Extension— Compiled Club History	April 1945, June 1945
1/23	Laurinburg USO Club: Compiled Club History	April 1945, March 1946
1/24	Maxton USO Club: Compiled Club History	May 1945
1/25	Monroe: Main Street USO Club—Compiled Club History	March 1945
1/26	Monroe: Winchester Avenue USO Club—Compiled Club History	March 1945
1/27	Raleigh: East Edenton Street USO Club— Compiled Club History	April 1945
1/28	Raleigh: South Bloodworth Street USO Club— Compiled Club History	April 1945

1/29	Raleigh: South Bloodworth Street USO Club— Club Closing Records	April 1946
1/30	Raleigh: South Bloodworth Street USO Club— Junior Hostess Rulebook	1944-1945
1/31	Raleigh: South Salisbury Street USO Club— Camp Butner Dance Records	January 1943- February 1943
1/32	Rockingham USO Club: Compiled Club History	April 1945 November 1945
1/33	Southport USO Club: Compiled Club History	March 1945
1/34	Spring Lake USO Club—Compiled Club History	April 1945

Series II: Richmond, Virginia, USO Club Materials

Series II contains items from the Regional USO Office in Richmond, Virginia. The Richmond USO Region Office oversaw the operations for all USO clubs in North Carolina and Virginia. The materials were collected by Jane Duke at the Richmond Regional Office, and sent to the North Carolina Historical Commission for the state's war records collection project to document the Regional Office's role in overseeing North Carolina's USO operations. The series contains various newsletters and programs from the Richmond Regional Office which were sent to all USO clubs within its regional oversight.

Additionally, the series contains the correspondence between Jane Duke and the North Carolina War Records Collection program officers (see Box 2, Folder 1). Another unique item is a set of Zine-style, informally-published USO Event Programs for the Richmond, Virginia, USO Club. The programs detail the time and place events were held, and show a weekly schedule of events held at the Richmond USO club (see Box 2, Folders 5-6). There is no particular arrangement for this series.

Box/Folder	Description	Date
2/1	Richmond Regional Offices Records Correspondence	October 1944, undated
2/2	<i>Mrs. "Gi" Newsletter</i>	November 1944- October 1945
2/3	<i>USO Post</i> : Richmond, Virginia (Vol. 2, No. 4— Vol. 5, No. 3).	September 1944- November 1946
2/4	<i>GSO Review: Girls Service Organization—</i>	September 1944

	Richmond, Virginia (Vol. 1, No. 1)	
2/5	Richmond, Virginia: USO Event Programs	September 1944- December 1945
2/6	Richmond, Virginia: USO Event Programs	Undated
2/7	Miscellaneous	September 1944, undated

Series III: National USO Records

Series III contains items from the national United Service Organizations that document its operations during World War II. These materials were mailed to regional USO offices, to assist in their management and supervision of local USO clubs. Items in this series include newsletters and monthly statistics of the national USO, documenting its operations and services offered to military personnel.

An item of interest in the series is the *Operation USO: Report of the President*, a publication from the national President of the USO that provides details and statistics regarding how the USO functioned during WWII (see Box 3, Folder 3). The collection also includes the compiled monthly statistics and financial reports for the national USO. These monthly statistical reports describe the monthly operations for the USO clubs in every U.S. state and region from September 1943 to June 1946. There is no particular arrangement for this series.

Box/Folder	Description	Date
3/1	<i>The USO Bulletin</i>	January 1943- December 1945
3/2	<i>The USO Bulletin</i>	January 1946- June 1947
3/3	<i>Operation USO: Report of the President</i> , United Service Organization Inc., 1941-1948	February 1941- January 1948
3/4	Monthly Statistics of USO Operations and Services	September 1943- December 1943
3/5	Monthly Statistics of USO Operations and Services	January 1944- June 1944
3/6	Monthly Statistics of USO Operations and Services	July 1944- December 1944

3/7	Monthly Statistics of USO Operations and Services	January 1945- June 1945
3/8	Monthly Statistics of USO Operations and Services	July 1945- December 1945
3/9	Monthly Statistics of USO Operations and Services	January 1946- June 1946