

**KANSAS WORLD WAR I CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
AUGUST 14, 2015  
KANSAS HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
KANSAS MUSEUM OF HISTORY CONFERENCE ROOM, 10AM - NOON  
MEETING NOTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

- Mary Madden, Director, Kansas Museum of History, Kansas Historical Society, Chairperson
- Blair Tarr, Curator, Kansas Museum of History, Kansas Historical Society
- Patrick Zollner, Director, Cultural Resources Division, Kansas Historical Society
- Matt Veatch, State Archivist, Kansas Historical Society
- Adrienne Landry, Outreach Coordinator, Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies, University of Kansas
- Dennis Cross, Volunteer, National World War I Museum
- James Patton, Volunteer, United States World War I Centennial Commission
- George Thompson, Adjunct Associate Professor, Historian, History and Philosophy of Medicine, The University of Kansas Medical Center
- Tom Jorsch, Assistant Professor of History, Bethany College
- James Whitfield, Commissioner representing The American Legion, United States World War I Centennial Commission
- John Daley, Professor of History, Pittsburg State University

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Ms. Madden welcomed members to the first meeting of the Kansas World War I Centennial Commemoration Committee (KWWICCC). At her request, each attendee introduced themselves and articulated their interest in the work of the committee.

**DIRECTIVE FROM THE UNITED STATES WORLD WAR I CENTENNIAL COMMISSION AND GOVERNOR BROWNBACK**

Ms. Madden drew the committee's attention to a February 25, 2015, letter from United State World War I Centennial Commission Chairman Robert J. Dalessandro to Kansas Governor Sam Brownback encouraging the establishment of a state level WWI centennial commemoration committee. Ms. Madden stated that she had been asked by Jennie Chinn, KSHS Executive Director, to lead a Kansas World War I Centennial Commemoration Committee. She noted that no funds had been appropriated to support the KWWICCC.

Ms. Madden said that, in her view, the primary purpose of the KWWICCC was to commemorate the legacy of WWI in the state. She observed that digital technologies provided unique opportunities to distribute the message quite broadly. Mr. Thompson concurred that identifying and describing the legacy of WWI was an excellent starting point for the committee. He also agreed that using digital technology to disseminate information was a savvy approach, although he suggested an emphasis on personal stories.

Ms. Landry described her efforts at the University of Kansas to compile information on WWI commemorative activities across Kansas. She expressed her willingness to share this information with the KWWICCC for possible broader dissemination.

Mr. Thompson asked whether the KSHS planned to host a website to serve as a clearinghouse for WWI commemorative activities in Kansas. Ms. Madden observed that the KSHS had created a shared calendar for Kansas sesquicentennial activities in 2011, with a less than positive outcome. She is not opposed to a clearinghouse website but said the KSHS would need assistance from others to maintain the site. Mr. Thompson said he believed there would be ways to find external assistance for a clearinghouse website initiative.

Mr. Cross suggested that the KWWICCC first identify what it hoped to accomplish and then identify the resources needed to achieve those goals. Ms. Madden noted that many Kansas organizations are already planning WWI commemorative activities and that the KWWICCC could consider a role in which it officially endorses some of these activities.

Mr. Patton reported that Kansas is not far behind the WWI commemoration curve as only a few states have established official initiatives to date.

Dr. Jorsch suggested that the committee encourage local institutions to digitize WWI materials and mount the digital collections on their local website. He did note, and Mr. Veatch agreed, that a digital initiative of this type would present significant quality control challenges.

## AGENCY/ORGANIZATION REPORTS ON CURRENT WWI CENTENNIAL INITIATIVES

### KANSAS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Ms. Madden referred committee members to a handout in their meeting packet summarizing KSHS plans to commemorate the WWI centennial. Planned activities include:

- **Signature Event – Kansas Museum of History Special Exhibit, *Captured: The Extraordinary Adventures of Colonel Hughes*, opens May 27, 2016.**  
James Hughes is a man you won't forget once you hear his story – one man from Topeka who witnessed wars from the front lines. As a member of the Kansas National Guard in 1916 he was stationed on the Mexican Border with orders to capture Pancho Villa, a prominent Mexican Revolutionary general. In WWI he was in Belgium, Germany, and France with motorized heavy artillery. On April 9, 1942, he was in the Philippines, captured and forced to endure life in six Japanese P.O.W. camps. His incredible story is told in this exhibit through the photographs he took before, during, and after World War I, the diary he kept while a P.O.W. and the objects he and his family donated to the Museum. In this 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WWI, there is no greater privilege than to bring you his life of extraordinary adventure.
- **Lecture Series**  
Free, public lecture series on WWI and WWII themes at the Kansas Museum of History during the run of the *Captured* exhibit.
- **Sundown Film Festival**  
Outdoor movie series in the summer of 2016 will feature WWI and WWII films.
- **World War Wednesday**  
Facebook posts promoting Kansas connections to the war and featuring KSHS collections.
- **KSHS Web Showcase**

The KSHS website will highlight the WWI centennial by featuring relevant museum and archives digital collections, a list of Kansas WWI memorials, and a WWI book list.

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#### KANSAS HUMANITIES COUNCIL

KWWICCC member Murl Riedel, Director of Grants for the Kansas Humanities Council (KHC), was unable to attend the meeting. He submitted a written report summarizing KHC-sponsored WWI commemorative activities, which include Speakers Bureau scholar-led discussions on WWI themes in fourteen Kansas communities and a grant award to the Lansing Historical Museum for a series of WWI book discussions.

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#### HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF MEDICINE, THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS MEDICAL CENTER

Mr. Thompson reported on a *Medicine in the First World War* website (<http://www.kumc.edu/wwi.html>) hosted by the KU Medical Center. The site highlights the emergence of the American base hospital movement through the lens of Base Hospital #28. Nursing during WWI is another topic of emphasis on the website.

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#### NATIONAL WWI MUSEUM

Mr. Cross reported that the National WWI Museum had an array of WWI centennial commemorative activities planned for the next several years. (<https://theworldwar.org/explore/centennial-commemoration>) Considering the National WWI Museum's proximity to Kansas, he suggested that the KWWICCC explore collaborative opportunities.

Mr. Landry noted that the National WWI Museum launched a passport program (<https://theworldwar.org/passport>) through which visitors to WWI sites in the region can have a special passport stamped and then get entered into a prize drawing.

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#### PITTSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Dr. Daley noted that Pittsburg State University's Axe Library Special Collections included WWI materials that would be excellent candidates for digitization.

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#### UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

Ms. Landry distributed a report summarizing the numerous WWI centennial commemorative activities being coordinated by the European Studies Department at KU. Active since 2014 and involving collaboration between more than thirty KU units, Ms. Landry described highlights of KU's WWI centennial commemoration including:

- WWI-themed academic courses
- 2015-2016 KU Common Book for first-year students: Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* (<http://firstyear.ku.edu/2015commonbook>)
- WWI-related exhibits at KU Libraries
- Spencer Museum of Art exhibit (ended April 5, 2015): *"The Second Battlefield": Nurses in the First World War* ([http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/programs/docs/WWI\\_Nurses6.pdf](http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/programs/docs/WWI_Nurses6.pdf))
- Twitter reenactment of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 28, 2014 (<https://european.ku.edu/wwi-twitter-project>)
- Upcoming lecture series (begins October 22, 2015): *Everyday Lives on the Eastern Front*

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## KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Ms. Landry reported that a faculty member at KSU is coordinating a project to digitize WWI poetry. (<http://americanww1poetry.drupalgardens.com/>)

### IDENTIFY GOALS FOR THE COMMITTEE

Mr. Thompson suggested that the committee should:

- establish centennial objectives appropriate for Kansas that complement and reinforce national objectives;
- identify projects and activities to achieve these objectives; and
- identify institutions that can contribute to these projects and activities.

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### DRAFT MISSION STATEMENT

Mr. Thompson also proposed a potential committee mission statement:

*To raise awareness of Kansas' role in and contributions to World War I.*

Members appeared to express consensus that this statement accurately captured the committee's mission.

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### DRAFT GOAL 1: IDENTIFY AND PROMOTE KANSAS WWI COMMEMORATIVE ACTIVITIES

Ms. Madden asked whether the KWWICCC should take on projects of its own or act as a clearinghouse for WWI commemorative activities in the state. Mr. Landry suggested that one of the best things the committee could do would be to help promote existing WWI commemorative activities. Start by identifying what is going on, compile that information, and then assist with the promotion of those events.

Mr. Veatch commented that the information could be collected through an online tool like SurveyMonkey (<http://www.surveymonkey.com>). Ms. Landry agreed to explore potential KU contributions to this effort.

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### DRAFT GOAL 2: ENDORSE WWI COMMEMORATIVE ACTIVITIES

Mr. Whitfield suggested that the committee could provide its endorsement of WWI commemorative activities in Kansas. Mr. Thompson noted that the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission provides endorsements of this kind. Ms. Madden suggested the possibility of encouraging institutions to seek KWWICCC endorsement through some kind of application process. She also suggested that a committee logo could be a simple way to denote the endorsement.

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### DRAFT GOAL 3: IDENTIFY, COLLECT, AND COMMUNICATE/SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT WWI MONUMENTS AND MEMORIALS

The group discussed various efforts to compile inventories of Kansas WWI monuments and memorials. Mr. Tarr reported that he has been working on a list of his own, but noted that there are numerous other initiatives. Members considered the potential to coordinate these efforts to document WWI memorials.

Mr. Zollner suggested that the Kansas Historic Resources Inventory (KHRI - <http://khri.kansasgis.org/>) potentially could be used as a tool to compile and disseminate information about WWI monuments and memorials. The KHRI, which is administered by the State Historic Preservation Office at KSHS, is a searchable inventory of the state's surveyed historic properties. Mr. Zollner noted that Kansas WWI monuments and memorials would be appropriate additions to the KHRI and that data submission and dissemination mechanisms already existed for the KHRI database.

Mr. Thompson asked whether WWI monuments and memorials resonated with contemporary Kansans as artifacts/objects worthy of attention? Committee members generally agreed that they did. Ms. Landry conveyed an anecdote about a specific monument that indicated WWI memorials resonate quite deeply with some Kansans.

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#### DRAFT GOAL 4: KANSANS IN THE WAR -- CREATE/COMPILE INFORMATION ABOUT KANSAS' ROLE IN WWI

Mr. Thompson proposed that the committee consider initiatives to research, compile, and disseminate information and stories about Kansas' and Kansans involvement in World War I. Mr. Veatch suggested that the committee carefully consider the scope of its activities in light of its limited resources.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL MEMBERS

Ms. Madden suggested reaching out to military organizations in Kansas (e.g. the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Fort Riley) for possible additions to the committee. She will make some inquiries.

#### NEXT MEETING

The committee will meet again in two months at the KSHS. Ms. Madden will communicate the date and time.

#### ADJOURNMENT

The committee adjourned at 11:58am.

Meeting notes prepared by Matt Veatch.