Michael Eure Show Podcast – Episode 63: North Carolina Archives

INTRODUCTION: Hello, this is Michael Eure, and I'd like to invite you to the Michael Eure Show, featuring student hosts and very special guest talking about a variety of interesting topics. You can find us on the Eagle Stream YouTube channel.

TAJ HEWITT: Hello, and welcome to this episode of the Michael Eure Show on this fine Thursday. Today we are joined by a very special guest, Dr. Darin Waters, as well as my fellow student hosts, Damien Johnson and Valentin Hernandez.

So, first things first, I'm gonna ask Jerry, who's backstage, to put the website in chat for the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. So, if you guys wanna check that website out, it's now in the chat. And straight away, we're gonna just do a quick, brief introduction of Dr. Waters from that website. And Jerry, if you could pull that up. In the meantime, while Jerry is pulling it up, I'll just go ahead and say that Dr. Waters is the deputy secretary for the Office of Archives and History. He received a bachelor's in science and political science and government from Liberty University, a master's in history from N.C. State and a Ph.D. in history from UNC-Chapel Hill.

And I'll let Dr. Waters introduce himself a bit more as the show goes on. But for right now, what we're gonna do is get a message from Valentin Hernandez, who is an Associate in Engineering student at Wake Tech, and he's also the vice president for the Wake Tech History Club. So, Valentin, would you mind to take over?

VALENTIN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, sure. Thanks, Dash. So, as Dash said, I'm an engineering student, and this is my second semester so far. And I'm also the vice president of the History Club. This is a very, it's a very new club, but also fun, and we're trying to improve every, every day, you know. It's like learning from all our experiences and get better every day. So, this is a very special day because this is, like Dr. Waters is a very important person because of the State Archives and also all the information that all the departments that he's responsible of.

So, especially, like, one of the most important events that the Wake Tech History Club has had in this semester is the 22nd African American cultural celebration that we have. I think it was on January, the end of January. It was on that date, and this was very special because we were talking about the land-grant universities, and to do that, I did some research with my history teacher, he's Dr. Will, he's also the advisor of the History Club. And to do that, we were, as I said, researching through the State Archives, learning about the land-grant universities, the twin colleges that are Elizabeth City [State University] and North Carolina

A&T. And also for the event, I volunteered with many of the members of the History Club.

That was the president and also many people, so we were very engaged in that event. And also I just wanna say that we had a lot of fun, and I'm very excited for this event because, I mean, for, for this show today because it's very interesting for us, the history. It's very important to engage the community, to learn about the past to, you know, not repeat the same mistakes from the from past.

So, yeah, I'm, I'm just gonna leave before the, after the Care Center video, but I'll follow the event in the chat, and I will ask questions. So, bye.

DAMIEN JOHNSON: Thank you, Valentin. Thank you so much.

Usually, guys, we have Jenny here to do a short little message from DEI, but she's not here right now. So, I'll go ahead and give you that little rundown. So, DEI obviously stands for diversity, equity and inclusion, and they sponsor the Michael Eure Show. They're why we're able to do what we do today, why we're able to speak to amazing people, like Mr., Dr. Darin Waters. So, I guess you guys should follow them on their website and their Instagram, stuff like that, to get any updated or related information. But we do want to thank them for sponsoring.

Moving on, we should have a video from the Care Center about to pop up by Jerry, where they will talk ...

VIDEO: The Care Center is here to provide wrap-around services for our students for when out-of-the-classroom challenges arise. I'm Mike Coleman, dean of Student Engagement and Impact here at Wake Tech.

My name is Magdalene Crist, and I'm a student at Wake Tech in the Associate of Science program. The Care Center at Wake Tech has been a great hub for resources, such as food, success coaching, technology support, brief mental health counseling, emergency financial assistance and transportation assistance. I've gotten a lot of great help with questions and just navigating Wake Tech. If I'm ever having a tough day or a tough time in class, the student success coaches are always there to help me whenever I need it.

Students can connect with us by visiting one of our locations, online and our website, or by email.

So, to my fellow students, if you ever need help with anything, the Care Ccenter is your one-stop shop, and I highly recommend.

And most importantly, we are here to support our students and make sure that they soar.

JOHNSON: Alrighty. Okey-dokey, that was cool. So, yeah, make sure you guys check out the Care Center. They have a lot of, lot of helpful resources for students nowadays. Make sure you go there and make sure you check it out. Make sure that you at least, you know, understand some of the things that are being offered in case you might need it.

Now, moving on to the exciting part. We have some introductions, so I'll start off with myself. We'll move on to Taj, and last but not least, Dr. Waters because we're saving the best for last. So, my name is Damien. I'm a second, I guess really my first year, Wake Tech engineering student, but it is my second semester. So, I'm also a current, current START intern, which I've been working every day this spring break over at N.C. State to do my research, but I can tell you guys that it's really fun. They have them, there's, like, an application period every semester, so I definitely recommend you guys check that out. But other than that, I'm the vice president of NSBE [National Society of Black Engineers] here at Wake Tech and also, of course, a co-host here on the Michael Eure Show. Taj?

HEWITT: Right. Thank you, Damien. And, and, yeah, me, I am in my last semester here at Wake Tech. I'm graduating this May, and just like Damien, I was also in the START program, so I can reiterate how, how fun and how interactive it is. I'm also in the SGA along with Jenny, who isn't here right now, and I'm also a Scott Scholar. And so, hopefully, I'll be at N.C. State next fall.

And yeah, we'll go straight into the questions Dr. Waters. Well, right before that, you could go ahead and introduce yourself a bit more.

DARIN WATERS: Well, it's good to be here with both of you, and I'm excited to just be in conversation with you here. You've kind of given a little bit about, about my background, and, you know, we can say more in a, in a little while as you ask your questions. But I'm a native of Asheville, North Carolina. Born and raised there, still have family who are there. And prior to stepping into this role, I was a professor of history at the University of North Carolina at, at Asheville and oversaw their community engagement work there.

So, again, it's good to be able to, to join the two of you this morning. And so, I look forward to just having a conversation with you.

JOHNSON: Great. Thank you so much. It seems like we might actually be able to get Jenny in here, and I want her to be able to introduce herself to you, Dr. Waters. Hi, Jenny. How are you?

JENNY AGUILERA: Hi, I'm good. How are you guys?

JOHNSON: We're good. We were just finishing up with some introductions. Dr. Waters introduced himself, and so did me and Taj. We were wondering if there was anything from DEI that you wanted to say and also if you could just do a small little introduction before we ended up getting into the questions.

HEWITT: I think she froze up.

JOHNSON: I know, right? I think possibly …

AGUILEZRA: … that'd be a …

HEWITT: Or she's staying extremely still.

JOHNSON: We'll see, yeah.

AGUILERA: You guys froze up on YouTube.

JOHNSON: Oh, OK. Must have been just to me. No problem.

AGUILERA: Yeah. Thank you so much. My name is Jenny. I am with the DEI Council's Student Success Committee. I'm super-excited to be here, and we're so excited to get to know about you more, especially because you're from the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources and then we have a big focus on DEI and being more culturally aware as the campus. So, thank you so much for being here.

WATERS: Great to be with you, Jenny. Nice to meet you.

JOHNSON: Thank you so much, Jenny, and Taj, you can kind of start off with that first question of yours.

HEWITT: Right. Excellent. So, Dr. Waters, I know you kinda just introduced yourself, but could you just give us a brief overview about yourself and your journey to becoming the deputy secretary of the office of Archives and History?

WATERS: You know, Taj, I, I thought about that question. You know, in full disclosure, you, you all shared questions with me beforehand, so I had a chance to, to look this over, and, and really, it's, it's hard to know where to start. I mean, I, I was enjoyed listening to the earlier conversation and, and hearing about the History Club there at, at Wake Tech, and I'm always enthused and excited to hear that people are interested in the study of history.

And I get questions all the time about where did my interests come from. I can't really tell you, but I was really, you know, I don't know that I can specifically say, all I can say is that I had a very close relationship with my two grandfathers, both who lived in Asheville. On my father's side was Edgar Waters Sr., who had been born, oddly enough, he had been born in 1897, has seen so much. And so, I learned a lot from him. And then, my mother's father, Mr. Isaiah Rice, who, if you google his name, you're gonna find a lot about about Isaiah Rice, and especially his work as a photographer, because, over the course of his life, I mean, he only lived 62 years. He died when I was 13 years old, and I still feel a, a deep sense of loss from, from his, from his death. But I was very close to him.

He was kind of, both, both of these grandfathers were my heroes, you know, and especially Mr. Rice. He was kind of my model of what a Renaissance man would be because he was so involved in so many different things. But I was mentioning his work as a photographer, and, over the course of his life, beginning in the late 1940s, he took a, took a series of photographs which are now housed at UNC-Asheville at, in Special Collections there, which have become a very valuable source to many scholars. But he kind of had this, had a historical frame of mind from the time that I knew him as a kid growing up. So, I think they had a major influence on my interest in studying history.

And then, I would say that I ended up having a very, well, I wouldn't say just one, but maybe two or three, really good mentors who steered me in the direction that I, that I went. One mentor in particular, Mr. James A Parker, who's no longer living. These mentors, with the exception of one, most, most have passed, have passed away. But Mr. Parker, I had told him that I was interested in going on to law school and in fact I came here to Raleigh, North Carolina, to live after I finished my undergraduate, undergraduate degree and worked here as a probation parole officer for about six years, and then, and with the idea that I would go on to law school, you know, and working in the court system. But he kind of had the wisdom to kind of steer me in a different direction and steer me toward the history course.

And I am, I'm really grateful for that. And in the course of studying history, many people will probably recognize the name when I mention it, but I was mentored and, by John Hope Franklin, the, the great African American historian and, who died in 2009. But Dr. Franklin, I actually have the distinction of being his last student, because he helped guide my dissertation research when I was a student at Chapel Hill.

So, it's been kind of a combination of listening to grandfathers and then mentors who can, kinda came along and helped steer me in the course that I actually ended up taking in, and it's been, been really good. And as you can see, I was a traditional academic historian since I've, you know, started my career as in history at UNC-Asheville and have now stepped into this kind of public space and see that there are a great number of opportunities here in the public space being in this role as the deputy secretary and overseeing the area of history for the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

So, that gives you a little bit, I hope that gives you a little bit of background about my, my path toward this job.

HEWITT: Right. Right. I'll just always be in intrigued by history. It seems like the, the, the trend was ...

WATERS: Yeah.

JOHNSON: I'd say, like, always having it around you, right?

WATERS: Absolutely.

JOHNSON: Like always having such like insightful and knowledgeable people who, with so much past history, and they can just talk about it. Because that's a lot of things that people like to do, especially as we get older, you know, like to talk about the things that we've gone through, things that we've seen, how we felt about those things. And I'm sure they did that a lot with you as we all built a great connection, so yeah.

WATERS: Damien, Damien, if I could respond to what you said because I think you made such a valuable point that I hope many in your generation get. I have two sons as well. The oldest one is 27, just got married not too long ago, and he and his wife now live in Florida. And then I have a younger son that's 23 who lives here in, in Raleigh. And I try to remind them that we old folks do have a little bit more insight on things than they may sometimes think. You know, my sons are, and they listen, they do listen, and what I think has been

valuable for them, and even though they never knew their great-grandparents, simply through the stories that I've told them through, and their willingness to listen to those stories, they seem to have a deep, deep connection to these people.

My younger son, his name is [redacted]. He is named after his great-great-grandfather, who, in the course of my research, when I was writing my dissertation and wrote about the development of the African American community in Asheville, we discovered that his great-great-grandfather, my great-grandfather, was one of the folks, one of the people who helped build the Biltmore House. And so …

JOHNSON: Wow.

WATERS: Yeah, no one in the family knew that until I started my research. And it was just by accident that I discovered that, and now, the Biltmore estate has written Lewis Waters into their permanent exhibit about the building of the house. So, if you ever get a chance to go to Biltmore estate, you will see a photo of my great-grandparents and a bit of story behind their involvement in the construction of, of the estate when it was being built.

But I just mentioned that to say that it's always been great that my two sons, like yourselves, have been willing to kind of listen to us old guys and, about the things that we have. They listen very much to their grandfather, and they learn a lot about, you know, the things that he saw and he and his, he and my mother actually saw as they were growing up. So, I, I just wanted to respond to the point because they, because I thought it was an important point.

JOHNSON: Well, thank you. Thank you. Jenny with the next question, yes.

AGUILERA: Yeah. Thank you so much for sharing, and one of my questions was gonna be, what did you write your dissertation on? Because I'm certainly considering pursuing that level of education, and I always want to learn what folks who do write them, write them about. But could you tell us a little bit about, about the different divisions? You mentioned that everyone has a different history, and it's so important to talk about all of our histories because, as you learned through your dissertation that you had such significant history, could you tell us more about those specific divisions of state history and the Maritime Museums that, for those who don't know, the Maritime Museums are museums that typically specialize in the display of objects relating to ship and travel on large bodies of water, which is honestly really cool. I've seen pictures of those. And then, of course, the subcategories.

WATERS: OK. Yeah, you know, so, Jenny, that's a big question. I'm glad you asked it, and I, I had to write down my response to this question because, you know, for your, your audience, for them to know, I'm still relatively new in this position as the deputy secretary, which, you know, and one of my colleagues here is always reminding me to make the point that being, serving as the deputy secretary means that I serve as the state's chief historian. Now, that doesn't mean that the state has an official history. It's just that I'm kind of overseeing kind of the history apparatus of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. But it's made up of many divisions.

I've been here for 17 months. I mean, there's some, because you have a question in here about surprises. I've, there are a lot of surprises that I've discovered along the way, especially about how they're structured. There's been a big surprise, and I say that because I've kind of been in engaged with this department for a long time, especially with the Office of Archives and History, so I didn't mention one of my other mentors was, I mentioned, you know, Jay Parker, John Hope Franklin, and the other one was Dr. Jeffrey Crow, who was my predecessor. At one point, he was the deputy secretary, and he was also my, my professor when I was a student at North Carolina State University. So, I got a sense of the department and of the Office of Archives in History through his work, his time here.

My immediate predecessor I knew very well and did a lot of volunteer things for the department. Obviously, I had to be here to do the research for my dissertation, which was written about the African American community in Asheville and western North Carolina. I also served on the state's Highway Marker Commission and those, our secretary likes to refer to it as "history on a stick." You probably see those things as you're, you see those markers that you're passing on the highway sometimes. So, that's a program that is a part of the, of the Office of Archives and History, and it has a an advisory committee made up of professional historians, and I served on that. I think the public would be very surprised to discover how intense that work can be because, you know, there's a very high bar that you have to reach to actually get approved for one of those markers. So, I had done that.

I had also served, Gov. [Mike] Easley had appointed me to the African American Heritage Commission, which was created, I think, in 2009. So, I was an inaugural member of that commission, and that's the commission that continues to, to do its work even now. And then I had served as a member of the North Carolina Historical Commission, which is the big commission. It's kind of like my board of trustees for the Office of Archives and History. It kinda helps to govern and give direction to this part of the department.

In fact, the commission, that commission will be meeting next week to consider a number of items that will come before the commission. Things that they do, they have to approve any accessions that we take into our museums or historic sites. They also approve any deaccessions that we make, and we do those all the time. But there are a number of other things that the commission actually does.

But real quick, the other divisions that make up Archives and History are the Division of Archives and Records, which is overseen by Sarah Koontz, who is the state archivist. We have State Historic Sites. You all may know that there are 27 state historic sites across the state. We'll be adding a new one sometime in the not too distant future, but we have just purchased the historic home of Thomas Day, who was an African American furniture and cabinet maker. We bought his home, and it will become a state historic site in Milton, in Caswell County. We have also two kind of historic sites that are not a part of the Division of State Historic Sites, and that's Tryon Palace, which is in New Bern, which is the colonial, one of the colonial capitals for the state of North Carolina, and then the battleship, which is down in in Wilmington. Some of you have been there. They're also part of state historic sites.

You then have State Historic Resources, which someone has already mentioned, which includes the state Historic Preservation Office. I serve also as the state historic preservation officer. There's a deputy, Ramona Bartos, who oversees the day-to-day operations there. She's an expert in all of that. That division also includes, you know, interestingly enough, it includes the Office of State Archaeology, and that's both on land and underwater, because we have a team down on the coast that does a lot of underwater, underwater archaeology, which is just really interesting work. Some of you may know, when it comes to our maritime museums, that off the coast of, just right off Beaufort, Blackbeard's ship was sunk off the coast, and they have been bringing up artifacts for preservation there for a while. So, we have a whole team that's doing that work.

And then, you have the State Research Office, which publishes a number of, of books. So, we're right now working on a series of children's books in preparation for the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. And, and also, we publish the North Carolina Historical Review. If some of you, don't know if any of you have ever seen that, but we publish that as well.

And then, the last, the last division that we have in Archives and History are the history museums, and there are eight history museums across the state. And that includes, Jenny,

the ones that you just mentioned, the Maritime Museums, which are all on the coast. And so, I, I encourage anybody who has the opportunity to visit those, to visit those sites.

AGUILERA: That's really, that's really, really cool. Thank you so much for sharing more about those divisions. I didn't know that so many of them were so closely interrelated. I know I've, anytime I visit a history museum, I like to know the history of the history museum itself. So, I have seen them listed there, but I wasn't really sure what they did. So, I'm super-super-excited now that the next time I go visit the museum in Wilmington to just kind of know more about the behind-the-scenes part.

Like, what's the most fascinating thing that's been brought up in your committee review meetings to be added into the history museum? And what would you say to folks that are trying to learn and get into, like, your field?

WATERS: Right. I, I would also encourage people to volunteer. You can volunteer at any of our state historic sites. You can volunteer at any of the museums we, we, our of, many of our, the pieces of the department, especially of Archives and History, do operate with a number of volunteers who are involved. So, I, and I would also, you know, when you think about our commission, so especially the North Carolina Historical Commission, and I'll mention this, what makes Tryon Palace and the battleship a little bit different from the other state historic sites is that they also have their own commissions, which are appointed by the governor.

People who are interested, you know, those are public bodies, so you can watch those meetings. You can come to those meetings when they happen in person to see some of the things that come before the commissions. Just yesterday, we had a special committee meeting in preparation for next week's larger North Carolina Historical Commission meeting. We had a smaller internal meeting that looked at some of the accessions, things that we're bringing into the history museums, and things that we're deaccessioning. So, we were deaccessioning a big, a big train engine.

AGUILERA: Wow.

WATERS: … which is, which is housed down in our, our, our Transportation Museum, which is in, in Spencer, North Carolina. And I would encourage anybody to go down. It's a great place to go visit. But we were deaccessioning the engine, a big engine over to the foundation, which is one of, it helps to oversee the Transportation Museum. They're gonna

then do the, the restoration work to that engine, and then it will be able to function and be used again at the site.

I will also say there's another interesting thing that has occurred since I've been here down at the Transportation Museum, probably one of the last remaining, since you're talking about the DEI work and all of that, one of the last remaining Jim Crow cars, train cars. The Transportation Museum actually has it, and it's actually being restored as an artifact that people will be able to, to actually see that and, at some point, once, once the work on that is done.

So, I mean, it's a fascinating, it's a fascinating department. It's a lot of fun. I spend a lot of my time doing a lot of administrative stuff, but I do get to get out and go kind of visit with teams. I think that, since I've taken the job, one of the things I've been most surprised by and most impressed with has been staff, the, the staff that we have here. Because they're, this is a very talented and dedicated group of people who work in the department and, and especially with Archives and History. So, I think that anyone who's interested in and engaging conversations with them, they're open to that. I think they will find it fascinating and probably see opportunities that they, they hadn't thought about before.

AGUILERA: Yeah, that's amazing. Thank you so much for sharing, and we look forward to all of the new artifacts that we're gonna be allowed to, you know, actually experience and read more about. Thank you so much.

WATERS: Yeah.

JOHNSON: Thank you, Dr. Waters. I kind of have a speed round for you a little bit because we've been getting a lot of questions in the chat. There's still a lot of questions that we wanna ask you, though we're running, we're kind of running a little bit over time. So, I have some questions that kind of tie in from Valentin Hernandez, where she says what kind of advice, and hopefully Jerry gets this shown up on the screen soon, but yeah, what kind of advice would you give to someone who wants to work in your history field? This kind of also ties into our question number 4, where we say, what would you say to some students that are basically thinking about pursuing a career in your agency?

WATERS: Yeah.

JOHNSON: There are opportunities to volunteer and such. But are there places where they can get internships? Can they network very well with other people, et cetera, et cetera? Can you just, you know, kind of give us …

WATERS: Yeah. I think you know, they should go to the website, to the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources website, and then go to the, to, specifically to, the Office of Archives and History. You'll see all of the divisions listed there. If you reach out, if, if any of your friends and colleagues, they reach out to folks that are listed there on the leadership team, you'll get a response. And you'll also see if you go to the, I have our site up right now, if you go there, you can do a search for internship opportunities. There are a lot of internship opportunities that come out of the Department of Administration. There's some specific to the department here, too. One of the biggest and most exciting internships that has been recently created here, and it's run by my colleague, Deputy Secretary Tracy Burns, is a, is an internship that specifically targets HBCUs, and so, to bring more diversity, you all were talking about diversity, is one of the things that we want. We're very intentional about here to department is to get more diverse voices in, involved in the conversations here.

So, if you reach out, someone will get back in touch with you. There are opportunities to come right here, to this department right here on Jones Street, and actually volunteer or intern right here. I have friends who now have jobs here in this department, but they started out, some as volunteers in Archives and Records, you know, being, working with our archivist. So, there are a lot of opportunities. So, go to our website, check out the website and also look at the leadership team, and then if there are divisions there that you are interested in, then by all means, please reach out because someone will get back in touch with you.

JOHNSON: Yeah. That sounds perfect. To me, it sounds like you're just saying people should have a little bit of self-advocacy, you know.

WATERS: For sure.

JOHNSON: Going out, definitely going after what you want and working on that. They should be motivated, passionate, I guess, about what they're doing because it seems like it also requires a lot of hard work, is what you're …

WATERS: It does.

JOHNSON: Everybody is not, it's not just me looking at exhibits all day. It's like I'm really talking about these things. I'm really having to work with then, work with the people who run these things.

WATERS: Damien, think about, you know, the point you just made about, if I can, I mean, the excitement, you know, look, I taught in the class, in the classroom for what, for 11 years, and it was fun. I had great students, you know, like you guys, I, and I loved it. So, I'm, that's why I'm kind of enjoying being in conversation with you all, again, today because I don't get the chance to do that as much now that I'm in an administrative role, you know. I talk to public, but it's great to be around students and then see those light-bulb moments that go off in students' heads, you know, when something is said. And I made it, when I was teaching at UNC-Asheville, I made it a point to try to have a session in history in my history classes, especially the first-year history classes, when you're kind of taking the general ed requirements, to talk about the opportunities and the job opportunities that can come from having a degree in history. And there are a heck of a lot of opportunities, and I see that more now because I'm on the public history side, right? So, I think that what you all are doing there at Wake Tech, with your History Club, having conversations like this, are important to at least allowing students to see what opportunities are actually out there.

I mean, you think about historic preservation work. Historic preservation, when you're restoring old buildings, old houses, right now, we're gonna have a major project that will be going on to do restoration work and, to the state, the old State Capitol building. I mean, the governor's mansion also is one of our historic sites because it's a historic structure. There's a very, that's very specialized work when you're doing that restoration work, and, and the guys who do that work, you know, they, they don't come cheap. So, there are, there are opportunities. There are real opportunities there, I think, to, for ways that history can be very economically beneficial for people who major in it, if that makes sense.

JOHNSON: That's …

WATERS: There are a great deal of opportunities.

JOHNSON: That's interesting. Yeah, I would have never, I would have never, yeah, like, been my first thought to my head of, you know, when I'm thinking, "How can I make some money, you know, getting a history degree?" But I can see it, definitely with your title, you know, you can get a lot of things done. So, that's good to hear.

WATERS: I'm, you know, you can't just hire anybody to do renovations to a historic structure. It, it's a very specialized type of work. And there are days when I think, "Well, maybe I should go back and, you know, get a degree in that and specialize in that. You know, make even more money." But there are, there are real economic opportunities there.

JOHNSON: Thank you so much, Dr. Waters. I'm gonna leave it up to Taj right now because I think we have some questions in the chat and also another question that we want to move on to.

HEWITT: Right.

JOHNSON: Thank you.

HEWITT: So, Dr. Waters, you spoke about the importance of state historic sites, and I believe there are 27 in North Carolina. Is that correct?

WATERS: Mm-hmm.

HEWITT: Right. So, we do have a question from chat from Wake Tech's MSBR chapter, if Jerry could just display it on the screen. Yeah, so it asks what is the process of an area or a physical entity being considered or declared as a historical site? You know, because, I mean, 27, they didn't just declare 27 all at once. So, how did, how did one after another become a historical site?

WATERS: Generally, if, that's an interesting question that's been another one of the surprises for me as I got into this job on that process. And sometimes, it can be a long, drawn-out part process. But the sites that are part of the system now, clearly they have statewide significance, right? So, it's, you know, even with the highway marker program, there's a, kind of a high bar that you have to pass to get a marker because it can't just be local significance. It has to kind of reach that bar of statewide significance. How has this site, this place, this story, you know, impacted the state or the nation in a larger scale? So, there's, there's kind of a bar that you kind of have to meet to get there.

Secondly, generally, the work on the creation of the state historic site starts on the ground with the local community that's interested in preserving a site. And then they will form a friends group or a foundation, which will do the work to restore a site, and then they will kind of begin the process of talking to their state legislators to bring it into the state system. Does that make, does that make sense?

You know, Charlotte Hawkins Brown, the Charlotte Hawkins Brown site, the Palmer Institute, which is one of the, which is one, will become the second specifically African American-focused historic sites in, in the state, is one of our state historic sites. It's located in Sedalia, right outside of Greensboro, major campus. This was a, you know, Charlotte Hawkins Brown and her work in the field of education, especially during the time of Jim Crow segregation, was, was highly important, continues to be an important piece of the story of North Carolina's overall history.

Another one of our major state historic sites is Alamance Battleground, which is in Alamance, North Carolina, in Alamance County. If you know the story there, that's where the regulator movement, which was a colonial movement that really has connections to the American Revolution. That battle took place at Alamance, at, at Alamance Battleground, and that is one of the sites that we have preserved to continue to tell that story.

So, it really begins on the ground. People who began kind of recognize the importance of a particular site and then will begin to engage us here in the department and the state legislature to officially name it a, a state historic site.

HEWITT: Right. And how, how long do you think a site has to be there to be considered a historic site? I mean, 10, 20, 50 years?

WATERS: You know, I, you know, that's a question I, I don't really know the answer to, Taj. You know, right now, one of the new sites that will be coming on, online soon is down in Edenton, North Carolina, which is the Golden Franks House. And if you know Golden Franks, if you know that name, I mean, he was a major civil rights figure here in the state of North Carolina. His, in fact, his daughter is a professor, maybe at Bennett College. She might be at UNC. I don't know which college, but she has given over her parents' house because it was the focal point of so much civil rights activity in the eastern part of the state. So, that's not been too long. I can't remember when Golden Franks passed away, but that's more like, it's more in the kind of modern area, this era, this, the more recent.

So, you know, the question of how long it has to be, I, I don't, you know, I don't know that there's a specific number of years before it becomes a state historic site. But you know, interest in the local community in making a site, you know, bringing it to the attention of state officials, you know, anything, anyone can begin that work and, and do that work.

HEWITT: Right, right. And right now, we're gonna take a quick segue to play a short clip from the Junkanoo performance that was at the N.C. Museum of History. So, Jerry, if you could just play that clip.

[Video of people dressed in 19th-century attire, including men wearing Union uniforms from the Civil War, dancing and singing a spiritual to a drum beat.]

HEWITT: Excellent. And we will be displaying the website in the chat for whoever, whatever amounts of people want to go and check that out for themselves. I think the website is Tryon Palace if they want to watch this. Is that correct, Dr. Waters?

WATERS: Yes. You know, I was, I was just there yesterday.

HEWITT: Yeah. Well …

JOHNSON: I'll, I'll just say this. We do appreciate all the follow-up questions you guys are putting out in the comments for Dr. Waters. But he is a very busy person, and I think there's somewhere he has to be very soon, so we'll go ahead and do some closing thoughts and such as those. And then, we also have something for you guys called the high-altitude balloon test that's going on with the Engineering Department that we are gonna want to showcase.

But closing statements and some things, Dr. Waters? Taj? Jenny? Me? Do any of you guys have any things you wanna say to the audience right now?

HEWITT: First, Dr. Waters.

WATERS: Oh, OK, you're giving me the floor, and I'll say thanks. It's been, it's been a pleasure to just talk with you, and I hope that the points that we were able to get to have been helpful, and I look forward to continuing to be in conversation with you all.

I am deeply appreciative of the fact that there's such a great interest in the field of history, and trust me, there are a lot of opportunities here. And I think that I would just tell everybody to be look out, on the lookout for things that are coming down the pipe through the department. We're now in, deep in planning for the commemoration of the semi-quincentennial of the American Revolution the 250th anniversary. That's kind of one of those hard words to say.

JOHNSON: Yeah, right.

WATERS: You know, once you figure out the word, you wanna use it every chance you get. It makes you sound kind of smart. But, but we are in the process of planning for that. There are a lot of volunteer opportunities around that. It's not just a story about the American Revolution, but we're looking at it as an opportunity to talk about the ideals that actually shape the American Revolution, which I think are fundamentally important to the ongoing struggle to expand the boundaries of freedom in this country. So, I would make that my last statement and just say, again, that it's been a deep, deep pleasure for me to be able to talk with, with all of you all today.

JOHNSON: Thank you so much, Dr. Waters. And my closing statement would be just the fact, you know, make sure you go listen to him. Listen to what he's saying, go participate, like you already said, self-advocacy and motivation is how you're gonna get a career and a job over there. So, start now, you know, start early. Get that, get that done now.

So, that's all I have to say for you guys. Taj and Jenny, if you guys have any things say.

HEWITT: Yeah, and I'd just like to say thank you, again, Dr. Walters, for coming on today. And I think you have a very important job. People might not realize how important your job is about. I think history is very important because, to move forward, we have to understand our history. And yeah. We hope that you can come to campus one day so you can have a, a longer discussion.

WATERS: I would love, I would love to. I would love to, so, you know, I, Michael and I can talk about that. You know, any chance that I get to get out and engage face to face with you all, I'll jump at that opportunity.

HEWITT: Of course. Thank you.

JOHNSON: Thank you.

AGUILERA: Thank you so much. Definitely thank you so much for sharing about your journey to where you got to now. We are so excited to learn from you, and like Taj said, it's so essential for us to know our history so that we can move forward perfectly with our mission for DEI, for diversity, equity and inclusion. So, we're so thankful to learn more about that process and how essential it is for us as a community to decide what's important to us and then move forward to preserve it and to fight for it to be respected.

Because our history does deserve to be respected, from North Carolina to our country as a whole. So, thank you so much, Dr. Waters, for giving us an insight to kind of the behind-the-scenes work of our history and our museums.

WATERS: Of course.

JOHNSON: Now, now that all that's done, Jerry, could you go ahead and put up the balloon flier that we have, and then we can go ahead and do our closing slide. So, recently, what just came up is the Volant High-Altitude Balloon Launch is an engineering competition hosted across, obviously, Wake Tech, but also some other schools in the N.C. State area. As you can see right there on the flier, it's from Tuesday, March 21st, from 12 to 1 p.m. It's gonna be on Southern Wake Campus in Parking Lot R. So, make sure you guys come out to that and see the Wake Tech engineering and STEM students, basically, test their high-altitude balloon.

Other than that, now closing slides, and Mr. Waters, we understand if you have to go. You can obviously go ahead and, of course, leave. There should be a "Leave Studio" button, but that should be, other than that, thank, thank you everyone for coming. Thank you, Dr. Waters, for participating. Taj and me and Jenny and, of course, everybody in the audience for their questions. But without further ado, that will pretty much be the end of us for today. So thank you.