Benjamin Filene Named Chief Curator at North Carolina Museum of History

Noted Public Historian, Scholar, and Developer of Acclaimed Exhibitions

RALEIGH, N.C. – The North Carolina Museum of History is pleased to announce that Benjamin Filene, PhD, has been named chief curator, effective on February 1, 2018.

Filene joins the museum after 12 years at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG), where he served as professor and director of public history. At UNCG, he ran a Museum Studies graduate program and directed annual collaborative public projects culminating in community-based exhibitions, programs, and digital initiatives. In addition, he taught courses on topics like museum and historic site interpretation, public history, and American popular music.

Filene is an exhibition developer and interpretive planner with specific interest in community collaboration and visitor engagement. Some of his recent curatorial projects include *Reading, Writing, and Race: One Children’s Book and the Power of Stories*, created with the North Carolina Collection Gallery, UNC-Chapel Hill; *Specimen Stories: Experiments in Historical Interpretation*, Wagner Free Institute of Science, Philadelphia, PA; and *Down Home: Jewish Life in North Carolina*, which opened at the North Carolina Museum of History and then traveled. The exhibition *The Fabric of Memory: The Cone Mill Villages*, opened in Greensboro’s Revolution Mill with his UNCG graduate students, won a 2016 Leadership in History award from the American Association for State and Local History. Filene has also written extensively on the power and future of museums, including the coedited book *Letting Go? Historical Authority in a User-Generated World.*
“Benjamin brings a rare combination of scholarly rigor, zeal for community involvement, and proven experience in organizing important exhibitions,” said Ken Howard, director of the museum. “He will add a strong curatorial voice to our leadership team as we chart our course for the future.”

Filene, who grew up in Chapel Hill, received his PhD in American Studies from Yale University and is the author of Romancing the Folk: Public Memory and American Roots Music, named a notable book of the year by the New York Times Book Review. Prior to UNCG, he was senior exhibit developer at the Minnesota Historical Society (1997–2006). He served as lead developer on exhibitions, including Open House: If These Walls Could Talk, winner of a WOW! Award for innovation and an Award of Merit by the American Association for State and Local History.

“I am thrilled to be joining the NC Museum of History and am very much looking forward to working with the museum’s outstanding staff and leadership during this time of change and growth,” Filene said.

“I’m grateful for the chance to gather and share stories from North Carolina’s rich history and to help the museum make history accessible and powerful for everyone. It’s a great place to be and a wonderful time to arrive here!”

**IMAGES Drop Box link, caption and credits:**
Benjamin Filene head shot.
Courtesy of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro

**About the NC Museum of History, a Smithsonian Affiliate**
The NC Museum of History is located at 5 E. Edenton Street in downtown Raleigh. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. The museum collects and preserves artifacts of North Carolina history and educates the public on the history of the state and the nation through exhibits and educational programs. Each year more than 400,000 people visit the museum to see some of the 150,000 artifacts in the museum collection. The Museum of History, within the Division of State History Museums, is part of the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

For more information about the NC Museum of History, call 919-807-7900 or access ncmuseumofhistory.org or follow on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+ or YouTube.

**About the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources**
The NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDNCR) is the state agency with a vision to be the leader in using the state’s natural and cultural resources to build the social, cultural, educational and economic future of North Carolina. NCDNCR’s mission is to improve the quality of life in our state by creating opportunities to experience excellence in the arts, history, libraries and nature in North Carolina by stimulating learning, inspiring creativity, preserving the state’s history, conserving the state’s natural heritage, encouraging recreation and cultural tourism, and promoting economic development.

NCDNCR includes 27 historic sites, seven history museums, two art museums, two science museums, three aquariums and Jennette’s Pier, 39 state parks and recreation areas, the NC Zoo, the nation’s first state-supported Symphony Orchestra, the State Library, the State Archives, the NC Arts Council, State Preservation Office and the Office of State Archaeology, along with the Division of Land and Water Stewardship. For more information, please call 919-807-7300 or visit ncdcr.gov.

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