Sunday, 26 January 2014

5:00 – 7:00 pm • UNC Institute for the Arts and Humanities • Hyde Hall

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(University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

“Gateway to Freedom” in West Germany?
The Friedland Refugee Youth Camp as Regulating Humanitarianism, 1947–1951

In the fall of 1945, the British Military Government ordered the establishment of a transit camp in the town of Friedland to help the local region cope with the refugee masses crossing the nearby zonal boundaries. Although the camp soon gained the reputation as the “Gateway to Freedom” for millions of German expellees, refugees, and prisoners of war entering West Germany from Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe, the camp’s regulatory regime meant that acceptance and resettlement in West Germany was more difficult than the famous moniker indicated. Taking Friedland’s sub-camp for vagrant male youths as an example, this presentation demonstrates how the camp’s dual regulatory and humanitarian mission affected key issues of family reunification, recognition of refugee status, and resettlement.

DEREK HOLMGREN is a doctoral candidate in European History in the Department of History at UNC-Chapel Hill. He is currently finishing his dissertation titled “‘Gateway to Freedom’: The Friedland Refugee Camp as Regulated Humanitarianism, 1945-1960.”

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