

LOCAL HISTORY

100 Years Ago: President Woodrow Wilson ordered the establishment of a training camp in Syracuse in May of 1917. By the first week of June, Camp Syracuse was partially open, and would be fully up and running by August. Located at the New York State Fairgrounds, Camp Syracuse was the permanent training home to almost 35,000 soldiers during the summers of 1917 and 1918. Some of the soldiers quartered in the livestock buildings of the fairgrounds were affectionately nicknamed according to the nametags left over from the horse or cow that had previously occupied that stall. Units including the "Fighting

9th" and the 23rd Infantry Regiments, which combined to make up the 3rd Infantry Brigade, called themselves the Syracuse Brigade. The 38th, 39th, 47th, and 48th Infantry Regiments were also stationed at Camp Syracuse for training prior to their deployment in France. The 38th Regiment's time in Syracuse was so important to them, that they chose this city as the place for a monument to their fallen comrades — the Rock of the Marne statue in Billings Park.

— Dan Connors for the Onondaga Historical Association



Soldiers relax on cots at the state fairgrounds, which was the home of Camp Syracuse during the summers of 1917 and 1918. Infantry regiments were stationed there for training before being deployed to France. *Onondaga Historical Association photo*