



Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

You are receiving this letter, as an introduction to a research project of the University of Waterloo that might be of interest to you.

The title of the project is "An oral history of immigrants of German descent to the Waterloo Region in the 1950s and 1960s" and we would like to invite you to participate because of your close connection to the German-Canadian community.

This project concerns itself with the life stories of community members and will connect them with historical events, in order to produce a relevant document. This will then be published in book-form.

We would now like to give you some detailed background information on the project:

While the Waterloo Centre for German Studies is taking the lead in this project, it does so with the advice and participation of several prominent members of the local German-Canadian community, including Ernst Friedel, Helen Schramek, and Drs. Marga Weigel and Manfred Richter. The central focus of the project will be on biographic interviews with German-Canadian community members. The individual pieces of oral history will then be placed within a greater historical frame. By doing so, the significance of individual experiences and achievements within the context of a whole community will be highlighted, as opposed to a mere quantitative analysis.

The research outcomes will be presented in two parts:

(a) A biographical/historical book publication

The purpose of the book is to represent single individuals from the community and embed their life stories in a larger historical context. The book will contain the names and other identifiers of the participants that they decide to share, unless they specify otherwise. Interviews will be conducted by a small number of trained interviewers in the language of choice of the interviewees (German or English). These interviews will be videotaped and transcribed. The transcripts will form the basis for the chapters of the book, which will be on a variety of topics such as life before immigration to Canada, the immigration experience, life in Waterloo Region shortly after arrival, work experience and business success, social and cultural aspects, education, contact with German-speaking central Europe, language biography, and the children's generation.

The book will be of relevance not only to the community, but also to a broader audience, as it will represent development of the German-Canadian community in an historical context by creating an in-depth account of personal experiences, as opposed to studies that highlight only individuals or solely focus on collecting quantitative data.

The interviews will be conducted in accordance with the strict guidelines of research ethics. Participants will only be interviewed after having given written consent and can withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences. When interview data is used in the book, interviewees will be sent relevant excerpts, so that they can check the text(s) for factual accuracy.

(b) An anonymous electronic archive

The collected interview data (transcripts) will then be anonymized and compiled into an electronic archive (corpus). The corpus will be made available to interested researchers in applied linguistics, cultural studies, and history. This archive will benefit the academic community, as it will be relevant to a varied range of future investigations connected to language, history, and cultural studies. Interview transcripts will be stored in the corpus only after obtaining written, informed consent from the participants. Furthermore, all personal information (including name, age and other identifying information) will be removed from the texts.

We hope that you now have a general overview of the project and its significance to individuals and the community. We would appreciate greatly to hear back from you whether you are interested in being part of this project, or whether you know anybody else who might be. If you are interested in participating please email wcs@uwaterloo.ca or phone Mat Schulze at (519) 888 4567 x36627.

Please direct any feedback and any questions you might have to Mat Schulze or Lori Straus at the Waterloo Centre for German Studies at:

Mat Schulze: wcs@uwaterloo.ca telephone: 519 888 4567 x 36627

Lori Straus: wcs@uwaterloo.ca. telephone: 519 888 4567 x 39267

Best Regards,

Mathias Schulze Lori Straus

Feel free to forward this letter and/or tell other German-Canadian community members of this opportunity.