

THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT IN WATERLOO, ONTARIO

WORK IN PROGRESS

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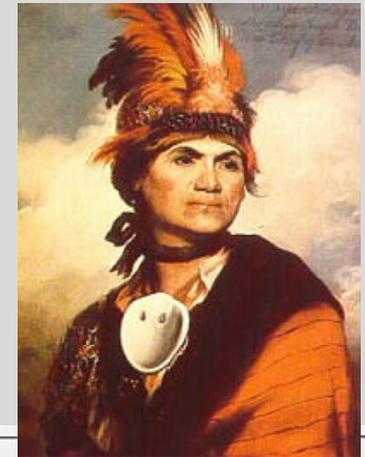
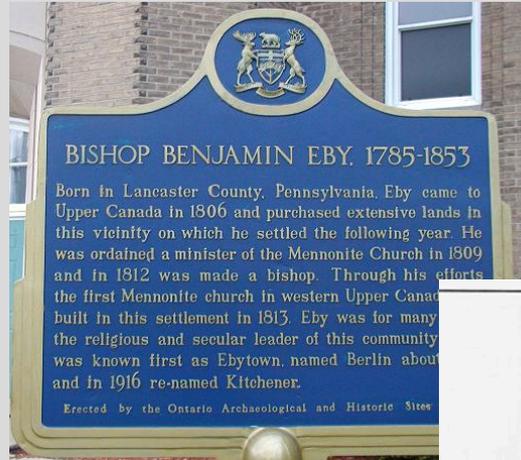
OUTLINE

- Some background
 - Ebytown
 - Canada's Kaiserstadt
 - Kitchener-Waterloo
- The project
 - community
 - research ethics
 - interviews
 - transcription
 - corpus 0.1
 - *Germans of Waterloo Region*
 - corpus 1.0
- Preliminary results
 - the why, the how, and the what



Ebytown—Canada's Kaiserstadt— Kitchener-Waterloo

- 1784 Haldimand Tract
- 1805 **German Tract**
- 1816 Waterloo Township
- 1827 Galt
- 1833 **Berlin**
- 1853 Waterloo County
- 1916 Kitchener
- 1973 Cambridge
- 1973 **Region of Waterloo**



Berlin, June, 1916
Voting for a new name for the
City of Berlin

Berlin, Juni, 1916
Abstimmung für den neuen Namen der
Stadt Berlin

BROCK
KITCHENER
CORONA
ADANAC
KEOWANA
BENTON



Ebytown—Canada's Kaiserstadt— Kitchener-Waterloo



Canada

- ✦ 400,000 GS immigrants 1945-1994 (of these 5% each A and CH)
- ✦ 2006: 3,179,425 of German ethnic origin in Canada
- ✦ 19% of skilled arrivals in 1953-63 → **focus of the Oral History Project**

Kitchener Metropolitan Census Area

- ✦ 2011 census: **3.34%** (**16,515**) German as L1 (RoW Census Bulletin)
- ✦ 2001 census: **19,420** L1 > 4,600 speak at home (RoW Stats Profile)

1981—**22.0%** 1951—**45.2%**

1911—**70.0%** 1871—**73.0%**



projektidee
konzept



THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

- early 2013: community initiative: a book about German immigrants
 - WCGS connections with Ger-Can Business & Professional Association and German clubs
 - small group of active community members
- spring 2013: brain-storming meeting of community members and researchers
- summer 2013: research ethics application
 - planning of recruitment, data gathering and storage, data processing and dissemination
 - video-recorded interviews, interview transcriptions, some artefacts
 - permission for book publication, research corpus



THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

- interviews took place from October 2013 to January 2015
- recruitment through connections, email lists, flyers, local radio and TV
- 111 video-recorded interviews = **124 hours recorded**
- **126 interviewees**; 15 interviews with couples or pairs; age range: 28 to 94; average age: **67**
- 23 students, staff, and profs as interviewers
- biographical narrative interviews in English and/or German
- **topics**: childhood, education, work, migration, language biography, cultural life, stories
- generally a very positive experience for both the interviewees and the interviewers



THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

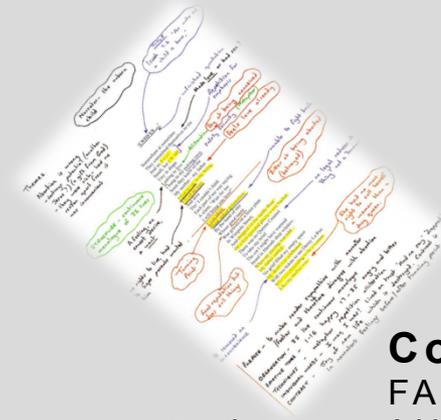
- started in October 2014: basic verbatim CHAT transcription
- corpus 0.1
 - about 1.3 million words
 - searchable by contributors to the book
 - transcripts not de-identified
 - annotated with comments, explanations, codes for content analysis categories

```
@Begin
@Languages:  deu, eng
@Participants: MRI Max_Riesling Interviewee, SSA
                Simone_Saturn Interviewer, Lena_Meier Participant
@ID:  deu|ohp|MRI|85;|male|Germany||Interviewee||
@Media: Riesling, video
@Location:  campus, Waterloo, ON, Canada
@Date:  20-FEB-2014
@Time Duration: 01:34:18
@Transcriber:  Judith Linneweber, 07-SEP-2014, Julia Roitsch 06-MAR-2015
...
*SSA:  seit fünf minuten bist du schon im bildschirm.
*MRI:  ach so hehehe.
*MRI:  okay okay.
*SSA:  ähm ähm können sie ihren ihren vollen namen bitte geben.
*MRI:  vorname.
*SSA:  vollen namen.
*MRI:  ah den vollen namen.
*MRI:  XXXXXXXXX.
*SSA:  mhm.
%exp:  topic=childhood.
%cod:  $FAM $LIV:DE $POL:DE
*SSA:  und wo sind sie geboren.
*MRI:  in Dresden in Sachsen.
%exp:  locale=Dresden.
*MRI:  äh zur zeit der Weimarer_Republik.
*MRI:  im jahre neunzehnhundertneunundzwanzig.
*SSA:  aha.
*SSA:  ähm.
*SSA:  können sie mir etwas über deine zeit äh deine kindheit erzählen.
*SSA:  was ist ihnen was ist dir noch in erinnerung.
*SSA:  was fällt ihnen noch auf zu dieser zeit|
```



THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

- planning phase and interview phase completed
- transcription phase to be completed this month (33 transcribers and 2 transcription companies)
- proof-reading, CLAN conversion, content analysis coding well underway (14 RAs until now)
- book project just started: ***Germans of Waterloo Region***; 20 to 25 authors **telling the story and stories of this large heterogeneous group of immigrants**
- research corpus compilation to start in October (corpus 1.0)



Topic

Familie
Auswanderungsgründe
Sprachbiografie
Bildungsweg
Identität
Veränderungen
Gesundheit
Kultur
Politik
Beziehungen zu
Vorbereitung auf
Besitztümer
Freizeit
Wohnverhältnisse
Eingewöhnung
Übersiedlung
Nachfolgegeneration
Medien, Nutzung von
Religion
Sonstiges

Code

FAM
AUS
BIO
EDU
IDE
CHA
HEA
KUL
POL
BEZ
PRE
OWN
FRE
LIV
GEW
TRA
GEN
MED
REL
SON



PRELIMINARY RESULTS

- Many interviewees arrived from Austria, Czechoslovakia, the two German states, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia in the 1950s/60s. Some were born in Canada and talked about their parents.
 - ➔ Third Reich as pre-text, Canadian immigration policies (from 1946/47 immigration of displaced persons, 1950 Germans were taken off the 'enemy aliens' list); post-war expulsions and socio-economic situation in the two German states)
- Many interviewees had considerable professional or business success, communicate well in English, identify as Canadians
 - ➔ successful integration and acculturation often in the first generation

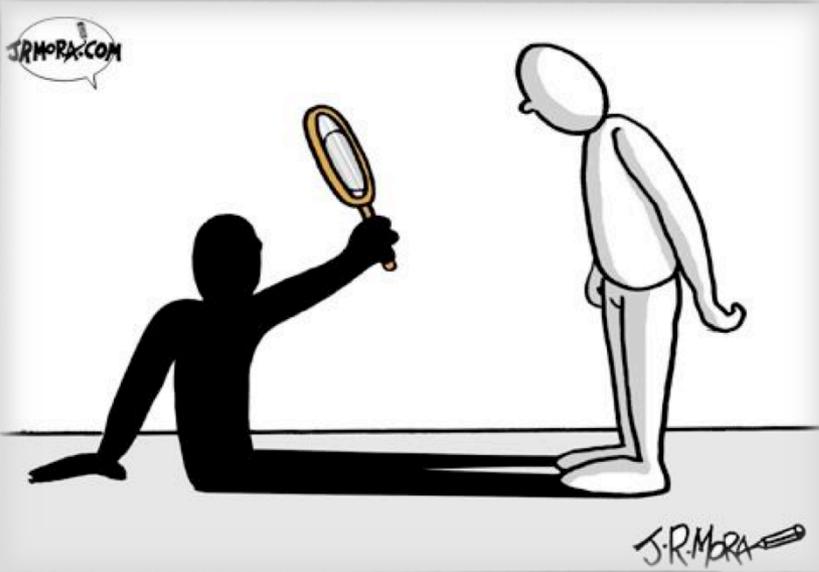


PRELIMINARY RESULTS

- Although many came from German language islands, language shift happened in 1.5 / 2 generations (interviews in English, children are hesitant to speak German, grand-children do not speak German)
 - ➔ NA language shift phenomena even for GS immigrants from old language islands with stable social bilingualism (Transylvania, Danube Swabia)
- We have had interviews with other GS immigrant groups in other projects, but did not have any participants this time (e.g. Mennonite, Swiss).
 - ➔ heterogeneous group of German speakers, some suspicions deeply rooted in historical, political experiences (hiding German identity)
- Group of interviewees reflects the aging community
 - ➔ migration patterns changed after the 1960s; Germany as an imagined community of the 1950s



REFLECTIONS



- difficult start to the community-university project due to diverse expectations
- eventually we got 3 times as many interviewees as originally planned
- interviews successful for both interviewees and interviewers
- large, long-term project that requires considerable commitment and funding
- student participation in large research project a great part of their graduate experience



Danke

Thank you

THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT IN WATERLOO,
ONTARIO

Mathias Schulze

