



German Oral History Project in Waterloo Region

The Waterloo Centre for German Studies at the University of Waterloo would like to document the role of German culture in Waterloo Region as part of our Oral History Project. We're looking to speak with people of German descent (including Austrian and German-speaking Swiss) who immigrated here and/or their children (i.e., first generation born in Canada). We would like to invite you to participate because of your close connection to the German-Canadian community. Several members of the German-Canadian community approached us to undertake this project: Ernst Friedel, Helene Schramek, and Drs. Marga Weigel and Manfred Richter, and we are excited to have their support.

We will be interviewing only throughout 2014. Please find more information on this project below.

Why Participate?

There are several benefits to participating in this project:

1. Your story will be preserved in an archive at the University of Waterloo for future generations to research.
2. We would like to include parts of your story in a book about German culture in Waterloo Region.
3. You will also receive a DVD of the interview to share with family and friends.

What Happens in an Interview?

After you register, the project assistant, Lori Heffner Straus, will contact you with the name of the interviewer. The interviewer will then contact you directly to set up a time and place for the interview. The interview can be video-recorded at your home or at the University of Waterloo. It takes about one hour.

The interviewers are trained to interview according to the strict guidelines of research ethics. They can only begin the interview after you have given written consent, and you can withdraw from the project at any time without any negative consequences.

The interviewers are fully bilingual and can speak both English and German, so you can use whichever language(s) you feel most comfortable speaking in.

The interviewers will ask questions about life in Europe, immigrating to North America, living in Waterloo Region, and raising your family. You do not have to answer all of the questions: it's up to you what you wish to talk about. We're looking to record *your* story. You decide what you wish to tell. Please feel free to invite another family member to join us and observe, if you'd like.

What Will the Recording be Used For?

A researcher in this project, usually a graduate student of German, will first transcribe your recording. As we already touched on, the recording of your interview will be used for two purposes: a book to be published for the community in Waterloo Region, and future research. Here are more details about both purposes:

(a) A Biographical/Historical Book

We will use the biographies collected in this project to show how the German-Canadian community in Waterloo Region contributed to the Region's development and growth. The book will cover a variety of topics, such as life before immigration to Canada, the immigration experience, life in Waterloo Region, work experience and business success, social and cultural aspects, education, contact with German-speaking central Europe, language biography, and the children's generation.

We would like to use your name and other words that may identify you directly in the book, with your permission. You may, of course, request to remain anonymous in the book, or to not even be included in it. Participating in this project does not mean you must agree to being published in the book. If you do wish to be included in the book, we will send you all excerpts from the book that you appear in so you may check them to make sure they are factually accurate.

(b) An Anonymous Electronic Archive

We will first anonymize the transcripts by removing all personal information from them, including name, age, and any other identifying information. The anonymized transcripts will then be compiled into an electronic archive and made available to interested researchers in applied linguistics, cultural studies, and history. We can only store your interview transcript with your written consent. As with participating in the book, you may request that your interview not be included in the archive. Participating in the project also does not mean you must allow your data to be stored in the archive.

Do you have any further questions about the project? Would you like to participate? If so, please contact Lori Heffner Straus, the project assistant, at (519) 888-4567 ext. 39267. If you prefer, you may also contact and speak with the project director, Dr. Mathias Schulze, at (519) 888-4567 ext. 36627.

We believe this project is crucial to teaching future generations about German-Canadian culture in Waterloo Region. Please contact us with any questions or to participate. Also feel free to pass this letter on.

Best Regards,

Mathias Schulze Lori Heffner Straus

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