
German-Canadian Studies Newsletter

Volume 1 Issue 2

Editorial

Why we need to support our graduate students....

Wisdom is often linked to age. It is a common assumption that the tempestuous folly of youth has to run its course and wear off before it becomes possible for life experience and accumulated knowledge merge into a benevolently enlightened view of the world.

Universities draw their strength from the serenity and wealth of knowledge embodied in their senior faculty members. It can easily be argued that disciplines and areas of study could not survive without the continuity provided by our academic elders and sages. After all, only somebody who has grappled with an issue for years can hope to arrive at a balanced synthesis of divergent ideas.

At the other end of the academic spectrum, there are graduate students. Impatient with the conservatism of experience, they itch — to use a famous split infinitive — to boldly go where no one has gone before. They dismiss, discard, debunk, and rush where angels fear to tread. In the process, they give vitality and vibrancy to old topics, and sweep the cobwebs off established intellectual dialogues which threaten to ossify into incestuous orthodoxies.

Graduate students' lack of respect for traditions lets them embrace new methodologies without skepticism

and ask new questions without trepidation. They force their supervisors to defend dearly-held positions with cogent arguments. In the ensuing dialectic process, the best and brightest will eventually concede that not every "received version" is necessarily a bad interpretation and that new methodologies are not always as promising as they first appeared to be. But they will also change the way we look at things.

Graduate students are tomorrow's academics. A field such as German-Canadian Studies cannot survive if its representatives neglect to take care



of the next generation. It is not enough to celebrate past achievements. The laurels, upon which we might be tempted to rest, will eventually become withered and lifeless. Students will turn their backs unless we turn towards them.

But what will attract graduate students to the field of German-Canadian Studies? The body of knowledge about German-Canadians was hatched by a generation of scholars who saw the importance of

German-Canadian encounters mostly from the vantage point of their own experiences. Now the field has reached the rebellious teenage years and will not mature unless allowed to break all the rules established by its parents. Senior academics in the field should encourage graduate students to challenge their views, trusting that the exercise will not kill their offspring but make it stronger.

But allowing latitude of thought and method is clearly not enough. Graduate students face a tough working environment with dismal job prospects and mounting tuition

fees. Students abandon the humanities and social sciences just as our governments have abandoned them. They cannot be expected to survive on idealism when society around them worships pragmatism.

Financial support can turn hesitation into determination. The Chair in German-Canadian Studies has, therefore, initiated a program which will support two new graduate students per

year. Endowed with a scholarship they may be able to conduct their research without the distraction of a crushing debt load. In turn, they will enrich our understanding of the German-Canadian experience and broaden the academic basis upon which German-Canadian Studies is built. This is an investment worth making.

Graduate Scholarships and Research Grants in German-Canadian Studies

The Chair in German-Canadian Studies at the University of Winnipeg is devoted to the study of the history and culture of German-speaking immigrants and their descendants in Canada. The government's ethnic studies program, under which the Chair was established, attempts to create a community of scholars interested in ethnic and immigration studies, especially by encouraging younger scholars to concern themselves with ethno-cultural communities. Following this goal, the Chair has initiated a program to fund graduate (master's and Ph.D.) research in the area of German-Canadian Studies. It is hoped that through this program graduate students will be encouraged to study all aspects of the German-Canadian experience, — past and present.

Eligible applicants are

- Students who are enrolled in a program of graduate studies at a Canadian university in such disciplines as history, linguistics, literature, sociology, geography, political science, economics, or cultural anthropology, and who are writing a thesis on a topic related to the mandate of the Chair.
- Students enrolled at a university outside Canada who have completed their first degree and are working towards a higher degree, preparing a thesis or equivalent on a topic related to the mandate of the Chair and planning to carry out substantial parts of their research in Canada.

Students should apply only after being accepted into a graduate program with an approved research proposal pertaining to German-Canadian Studies. Applications must be received **on or prior to January 31, 1997**. Successful candidates will have completed most of their course work before taking up the award. Each scholarship will be awarded on a competitive basis, and the candidates will be evaluated by an interdisciplinary panel of five Canadian scholars.

Two new scholarships will be given per year. The amount of the award is \$6,000 per annum for an M.A. student and \$8,000 per annum for a Ph.D. student. The M.A. scholarship is not renewable. A recipient of a Ph.D. scholarship may apply for renewal once. The awards will be announced no later than 31 March 1997.

In addition to promoting graduate student research, the Chair in German-Canadian Studies has a special obligation to the German-Canadian community of Manitoba, which, through its financial support, has helped to establish the program. In order to stimulate and facilitate research that explores past and present experiences of German-speaking immigrants and their descendants in what is today the province of Manitoba, the Chair will award up to \$1,000 to specific research projects which are related to this topic.

The research grant is intended for both academic researchers, either at the faculty or student level, and private researchers who are not associated with a university. Two research grants will be given per year. The amount of each grant is up to \$1,000; the award is not renewable, but researchers may apply with a different project in subsequent competitions. Applicants must submit an application form and research proposal, along with a detailed budget. Applications must be received **on or prior to February 28, 1997 or August 29, 1997**. The awards will be announced in March and September respectively.

Each research grant will be awarded on a competitive basis. The candidates will be evaluated by a local committee including the Chair, two members of Manitoba universities and two members of the community. The committee will assess the merit of the proposal, and the candidate's willingness to share his/her findings with the community in public lectures, publications or exhibitions.

For further information and application forms for both graduate scholarships and research grants, please contact Erin Booth, Research Administration Officer, The University of Winnipeg, 515 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R3B 2E9.

Phone: (204) 786-9797. Fax: (204) 783-8910.

Faculty Sources of Funding

The German-American Academic Council Foundation (GAAC) together with the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation is awarding TransCoop Program grants for transatlantic research cooperation among German, American and/or Canadian scholars in the humanities and social sciences. Projects can receive up to US\$ 60,000 over a three-year period. Pre-requisite is that the amount granted by TransCoop be matched by funds from US and/or Canadian sources. The application deadline for TransCoop projects that begin no earlier than June 1997 is December 15, 1996. Applications are available from GAAC, 1055 Thomas Jefferson St., N.W., Suite 2020, Washington D.C. 20007. Tel (202) 296-2991. Fax (202)833-8514. E-mail: gaac@nas.edu

News from the Chair

In the 1996-97 academic year, Dr. Sauer offers an experimental third-year course "History of International Migration: The German Experience." The course explores different German migration patterns starting in the 18th century, as well as the impact of German immigrants on different societies. It starts with the continental migrations of Germans into Eastern Europe and Russia, explores religiously, economically and politically motivated migrations of Germans to North America and Australia before dealing with colonization efforts in Africa and China. The twentieth century component of the course examines the impact of World War I on German communities in different countries, the reactions of the world to refugees from Nazi Germany and Holocaust survivors as well as to German expellees and escaped Nazis in the postwar period. The course concludes with a look at Germany as the recipient of guest workers and immigrants in a historical and modern context.

Upcoming Events

A workshop called "German-Canadian Identity: Methods and Results" is scheduled to take place in Edmonton, Alberta on 4-6 October 1996. The proceedings of this workshop will be published. Topics range from theoretical approaches to the question of identity and the political influences on academic definitions of German-Canadian identity, to case studies of German-speaking women immigrants, papers on the various forms of constructing German-Canadian identity and a session exploring the parallels between German and German-Canadian identities. The presentations will be followed by a general discussion on the state of research in German-Canadian Studies and a public discussion on the value of German-Canadian community as a source and repository of knowledge.

Media

"Nothing to be written here" - a video by Wendy Oberlander - is the story of over 2,000 German and Austrian Jewish refugees who were interned in Britain at the outbreak of World War II and transferred to Canada in 1940, to be held behind barbed wire alongside Nazi POWs. This episode in Canadian history, previously known through Eric Koch's book "Deemed Suspect", is traced as a mixture of personal narrative and historical documentary. Archival footage and documents are combined with visits to former camp sites in eastern Canada and the memories of Oberlander's father in this award-winning video. For distribution information, contact Wendy Oberlander, 2635 East Fifth Ave., Vancouver BC, V5M 1N1 Phone and fax (604) 255-9557.

Archival Sources for German-Canadian Studies

For anyone interested in genealogy, or the history of the settlement of the Canadian prairies, a veritable treasure trove of knowledge has been uncovered, and is in the process of being made available to researchers. During the 22 and 26 August, 1988, archivists from the Government Archives Division discovered a rich collection of land records in a vault at **Canadian National Railway's** Union Station in Winnipeg and in a large storage shed at its East Yard Station. The collection provides details regarding the sale of land by Canadian railway companies to prairie settlers from the early 1890s through to the mid 1960s. The land records consist of 311 ledgers and registers, approximately 181 metres of files and about 100 plans dealing with farm and townsite land in Western Canada. **The Federal Records Center** in Winnipeg, a branch of the National Archives of Canada, now houses and protects this important collection of records for future use.

Though the collection is not yet ready for researchers, when its organization and cataloguing is completed it will provide a valuable insight to the bureaucratic, political and commercial machinations which fuelled the settlement of the prairies.

The University of Winnipeg has deposited the **William Wanka papers** at the **National Archives of Canada** in Ottawa. Wanka, who died in 1992, had come to Canada in 1939 as one of a group of Social Democratic refugees from the Sudetenland and had settled in British Columbia. In the postwar years he became actively involved in the resettlement of refugees. His papers contain more than four decades of correspondence and documentation relating to such special projects as the Tate Creek Development Company Ltd., as well as to the Sudeten German settlements in Canada, his work with postwar refugees and the social and political activities of Sudeten German groups in Canada.

The **University of Winnipeg Library and Archives** has retained William Wanka's collection of books and pamphlets.

The **University of British Columbia Archives** has within its holdings a collection of documents from the **German Consulate of Montreal**.

The office of the German Consulate General was established in Montreal, Quebec in 1909. In 1937 the office was moved to Ottawa, but a German consulate remained in Montreal to handle commercial matters.

The collection consists of the correspondence, reports, and memoranda (1935-1939) of the Consul General. Also included are Montreal office papers dating from 1919 and a few original documents from the Vancouver Consulate (1909-1911). The papers were transferred to Vancouver for safekeeping during the war and were never returned. An inventory is available.

Community News

A traveling photo exhibition documenting the history and achievements of German-speaking immigrants in British Columbia attracted much attention during the German-Canadian Days in Harrison Hot Springs, B.C., in late March. The exhibition was created by Professors Peter Liddell and Michael Batts with the support of the Goethe Institute and the German Consulate. For information on the exhibition and its whereabouts, please contact the German-Canadian Congress B.C.

An exhibition by retired architecture Professor Dieter Roger on German contributions in the province of Manitoba can currently be viewed at the "Treffpunkt Winnipeg Canoe Club."

On 3 November 1996 the German-Canadian Congress of Ontario will be hosting Germanica 96 in the Transylvania Club in Kitchener. Germanica 96 features arts and crafts, cultural displays and a heritage show.

Publications

- Just in time to celebrate the one thousandth anniversary of Austria, Carleton University Press has released two volumes exploring the Austrian community in Canada. [A History of the Austrian Migration to Canada](#) (edited by Frederick Engelmann, Manfred Prokop and Franz Szabo) will appeal to a general audience while [Austrian Immigration to Canada: Selected Essays](#) brings together a number of scholarly papers on the subject.
- The long and successful academic partnership between the Universität Trier and the University of Manitoba has produced another volume of essays which are the result of an annual conference. In [1945 in Canada and Germany: Viewing the Past Through the Present](#), edited by Hans Braun and Wolfgang Klooss (Kiel 1996), German and Canadian scholars explore the end of the war in the two countries that fought against each other and demonstrate the beginnings of a new relationship.
- Roy Rempel's book [Counterweights: The Failure of Canada's German and European Policy, 1955-1995](#) is scheduled to appear in early 1997 (McGill- Queen's University Press). With an emphasis on defence, the author traces pivotal events in the evolution of Canada's relationship with West Germany and demonstrates Ottawa's repeated failure to integrate the political, economic and military dimensions of its foreign policy in order to create an effective European counterweight to the United States.
- Denis Smith's award-winning biography of one of Canada's more colourful prime minister's, [Rogue Tory: The Life and Legend of John G. Diefenbaker](#) (Toronto 1995) contains intriguing, if not surprising, revelations on Diefenbaker's ambiguous attitude towards his German origins. Dief's paternal grandfather, George Diefenbaker (Diefenbacher) hailed from Baden and had emigrated to Upper Canada in the 1850s. Seven decades later, his grandson — having been publicly called a "Hun" — saw it necessary to demonstrate his Canadian-ness by fabricating a family history in which German ancestry was safely removed even further: "Am I a German? My great-grandfather left Germany to seek liberty. My grandfather and my father were born in Canada. ... If there is no hope for me to be Canadian, then who is there hope for?" (46) Diefenbaker continued to insist on this version which became part of the legend. He also continued to oppose the hyphenating of Canadians.

Research Projects

• **Dr. Geoffrey Hayes**, Professor of History at The University of Waterloo, has been commissioned to write a history of Waterloo County. His work seeks to trace the creation and re-creation of the county's cultural identity. Despite the fact that its original settlers were Pennsylvania Mennonites, Waterloo County's early cultural life was defined by its continental Germans. It was only in the aftermath of the First World War that a Mennonite cultural identity re-emerged as a symbol of the county, although

life had progressed far past its pioneering roots. Dr. Hayes' study examines how Waterloo County's Germanic cultures helped to serve and promote economic and political ends.

• **Dr. Dirk Hoerder**, Professor of History at the Universität Bremen, is the recipient of the 1996 John Diefenbaker Award. Nominated by the University of Toronto, where he will be involved in the Program in Ethnic and Pluralism Studies, Dr. Hoerder proposes to examine issues of acculturation encountered by recent immigrants. Dr. Hoerder is well

known to immigration historians and recognized for his unique perspective focusing on the historical background of the immigrants' departure from Europe. He combines an analytical approach with "life stories" — portraits of men and women from all walks of life.

The annual Diefenbaker award, established in 1991 and administered by the Canada Council, enables a German scholar to spend up to twelve months in Canada. It is a counterpart of the Konrad Adenauer Award, created in 1988 by Germany for Canadian

scholars.

• **Barbara Lorenzkowski**, a former student of Professor Helbich's in Bochum, has completed her Master's degree at the University of Ottawa. Her thesis takes a fresh look at a controversial topic: the internment of 850 German-Canadian civilians during the Second World War. Accused of being Nazi spies, saboteurs and subversives, the internees were granted an opportunity to defend themselves. In the course of these appeal tribunals (the transcripts of which form the backbone of Ms. Lorenzkowski's research) state officials and internees passionately debated what it meant to be a "good Canadian". The study reveals conflicting concepts of citizenship and the important contribution of "hyphenated" Canadians to changing definitions of loyalty, civic duties and the nature of Canadian society. This is a timely addition to Canadian historiography, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the Canadian Citizenship Act.

• **Annette Puckhaber** used her time as an exchange student in Canada to explore German-speaking immigration during the time of the National Socialist regime in Germany. Now back at the University of Trier, she is completing her Zulassungsarbeit with the revealing title "A

paradise for few" in which she examines Canadian attitudes towards German-speaking refugees from 1933 to 1945. Who was able to squeeze through the narrow gates, and how were they received? The answer, according to Ms. Puckhaber, is a less than honourable chapter in Canadian history.

• Since 1983 **Dr. Alexander Ritter** of the Universität Hamburg has been organizing regular conferences examining the culture of German communities abroad. In cooperation with the Institute of Regional Research and Information (Flensburg) Dr. Ritter has held conferences on literature, language, media and the political, religious and economic life of German minorities in Europe.

• **John Walsh** has completed a Master's thesis at the University of Ottawa in which he examines post-World War II German-speaking immigrants in the nation's capital. His study focuses on some of the principal institutions with which these immigrants were involved, such as the German Benevolent Society, St. John's Lutheran's Church and the Ottawa Herald (a community newspaper). He explores how involvement and activities revealed the ethnic identities of these immigrants.

Arguing that life cannot be separated into public and private spheres, Mr. Walsh explores how, for example, the intensely personal act of choosing a name for a child reflects changing political and economic conditions. His thesis is an example of a micro-study — an approach successfully used in writing the history of other ethnic groups.

You asked....

about the "Historian Hotel" featured previously: Plan to have a glass of wine but don't plan to stay overnight! The Historian Hotel is located in Adelaide, South Australia where a "hotel" offers food and drinks but no accommodation. It is, nevertheless, the ideal starting point for an exploration of the German wine culture of the Barossa Valley....

Editor: Angelika Sauer

Production: Curt Campbell

© Chair in German-Canadian Studies,
The University of Winnipeg, 515
Portage Ave., Winnipeg MB R3B 2E9.
Phone (204) 786-9007; Fax (204) 772-
0472.

Vol.1, No.2 September 1996

Note: The cover image, the "Second
Year Arts Class Executive of 1918-19"
was kindly provided by the University
of Manitoba Archives and Special
Collections.

This newsletter is published on a regular basis. Please help us make it more interesting by sending us your announcements, brief summaries of publications, research projects, course syllabi, etc. If you know of somebody who would like to receive this newsletter, please let us know.

German-Canadian Studies in Cyberspace

Come visit our web page at <<http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/~germcan/angieindex.html>>