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# German-Canadian Studies Newsletter

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Volume 3, Issue 1 • Spring 1998

## Editorial

### The Sights and Sounds of the German-Canadian Experience

The British flag was huge and dominated the float that the Canadian German Society had built for Winnipeg's 75th anniversary celebrations. Almost as large was the sign "Building for Canada" which served to remind spectators of the traditional image of German settlers in Canada. Words such as "commerce" and "industry" flanked the Manitoba provincial flag. Don't forget, they seemed to say, this is what we are all about! And as the float made its way along Main Street, people listened to the cheerful accordion and tuba music produced by the men in funny hats, and forgot all about images of jackboots and black SS uniforms. Weren't Canada's Germans an industrious, gemütlich and politically loyal bunch? How could anybody doubt it! The year was 1949.

The photograph, part of the collection of the Western Canada Pictorial Index (and now available on the Chair's web site) says more than a hundred words. It tells its own story. It transports the researcher to Winnipeg's streets in 1928 and conveys the mood of the day. It captures the ambiance of the moment and makes us understand what people felt, what they tried to achieve and how they interacted. And it invites us to understand their universe.

Photographs are important sources for the historian. They fill in the gaps that written documents leave in the historical record. Like spices in a bland dish they complement and enhance. They are representations of our heritage. And when we are dealing with persons or groups of people who do not leave behind a public record of their existence, photographs become crucial. Documenting 'ordinary' lives, they make sure that we do not miss out on the basics.

The same can be said about so-called oral histories. Interviews in which people tell their life stories are a way

of discovering the meaning that people attach to their own experiences. We learn by listening closely to what they say and, indeed, what they do not say. For example, when asked what made her choose to emigrate to Canada, Mrs. B. pauses. She clears her throat; a little laugh, then, with a firm voice: "My husband always had a sense of adventure. He had read a lot about Canada." Mrs. B. has just shared an important insight: Emigration was not her choice at all, but she went along with her husband; and she has no regrets because it all worked out for the best.



German Settlers from St. Andrews at the CP Rail Festival, 1928. (WCPI)

When people are approached to share their family photographs or their memories they often react with disbelief: How could these mementos of my life possibly be of interest to historians?! They are. In fact, we cannot do without them. This is why, with this issue of the newsletter, the Chair in German-Canadian Studies is launching the project "Sights and Sounds of the German-Canadian Experience." Together with the professional and experienced staff of organizations such as the Western Canada Pictorial Index and the Multicultural History Society of Ontario, I will try to locate, collect, and preserve the unwritten part of German-Canadian history. Please read this newsletter to find out how you can help. Give a voice and a face to our heritage.

The Chair in German-Canadian Studies hopes to locate, catalogue and preserve 200 photographs documenting the historical German-Canadian experience in Western Canada. If you have photos that show aspects of family, social, church or work life of German-speaking immigrants (even if you are not sure whether they are important) please contact the staff at the Western Canada Pictorial Index. And remember: the originals will be returned to you.

## Western Canada Pictorial Index

By Joyce Goodhand

The Western Canada Pictorial Index is dedicated to the preservation of the visual history of the Canadian West. It is a non-profit organization, originally founded in 1971, whose goal is to locate, identify, reproduce, and catalogue photographs from a wide variety of sources to preserve them for use by educators, researchers, and members of the general public.

The Index has over 70,000 photographic images, in 35mm, slide and negative form in its collection in the Hammond Building on Albert Street in Winnipeg's historic Exchange District. All photographs received by the Index are catalogued and cross-referenced, using over three hundred subject categories, and then the information is entered into its computerized database. Over its twenty year history, the Index's images have been used by researchers, authors, educators and students, video and film producers, museums, and grassroots organizations in Canada, the U.S., and Britain.

The Index does not seek to acquire original photographs for its collection; originals are borrowed, reproduced and then returned to their original owners. This policy allows individuals to have their historical pictures preserved in a professional manner, and to make them available to others, while retaining the originals for their own use.

Some think that their family photographs are not valuable, but the Index has acquired many beautiful and historically significant photos in this way. These trace the history of immigration to the prairies, show the lifestyles and costumes of earlier time, and record the architectural changes of our cities and the rural west.

The Index's office is open Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and its staff and resources are available to anyone interested in widening their knowledge and understanding of Western Canada. Reproductions of photos can be purchased at competitive prices. If you are interested in seeing the Index's collection or if you have photographs you would like to have included in the

collection, please call (204) 949-1620. The Pictorial Index has also recently established a web site on the Internet and an e-mail address.

Web site: <http://www.telenium.ca/westcanpix/>

E-mail: [Westpics@escape.ca](mailto:Westpics@escape.ca)

G-C

## Canada Missed Berlin Bargain

By Frederik Jonker

It was the big one that got away. In 1986 a memorandum of understanding was signed between East Germany and Canada on the exchange of embassies in Ottawa and Berlin. Previous to this, neither country had an embassy in the other's capital. Canada had an embassy in Warsaw and shuttled diplomats between this city and Berlin. East Germany was eager to set up an embassy in Ottawa to further trade and diplomatic relations; however, Canada was not as enthusiastic about establishing an embassy in Berlin.

By late 1987, the East Germans had begun to set up their embassy in a rented building in Ottawa. Canada, however, had done little in East Germany arguing that the Germans wanted the Canadians to set up their embassy in an East German suburb rather than in the city centre. So East Germany offered to lease Canada a lot in the city centre for \$1 for 99 years if the embassy building was completed by 1991. The Canadian government did not know what to do. Officials did not know how to raise the \$10 million for the building and did not think that an East German embassy was high on the list of cabinet priorities. In May 1989, government officials stated that "East Berlin is not a project . . . since there is no source of funding." As the Berlin wall fell late that year, the East German ambassador was still urging Canada to take the offer.

Canada still does not own an embassy in central Berlin. Currently, the government is preparing to spend approximately 30 million German marks (\$23.4 million Canadian) to purchase land and build an embassy in the new reunified Berlin. The property they could have leased for \$1 was directly opposite the U.S. embassy, down the street from the Brandenburg Gate, and only a few blocks away from the Reichstag building where the German parliament will move from Bonn in 1999.

As Heidi Bennet, a retired Canadian diplomat says, "It's one of my deepest regrets. . . . we could have been millions and millions richer."

Taken from Alan Freeman, European Bureau in The Globe and Mail, March 23, 1998.

G-C

## Who's Who In German-Canadian History: Wilhelm Hespeler

By Angelika Sauer, with research by Emily Stokes-Rees

**W**hen Wilhelm Hespeler died in the Vancouver home of his son at the ripe old age of 91, he was well known in Southwestern Ontario and Manitoba as a businessman, civil servant, politician and philanthropist. Yet today, few people remember him and his family.



Wilhelm Hespeler (WCPI)

Wilhelm was born on 29 December 1830 in the Grand Duchy of Baden. His mother, Anna Barbara Wick was the granddaughter of the Hungarian nobleman Count Andrassy, and his father a well-to-do merchant who moved from Wurttemberg to Baden. Wilhelm had one brother and seven sisters; the children were educated in Baden and France.

In a chain migration spanning several decades, all but two of the girls and the father (who died in 1840) migrated to Preston, Canada West. The oldest boy, Jakob (born in 1810) established several mills and factories in the area and had the village of New Hope named after him when it was incorporated in 1859. Sister Charlotte (born in 1822) met and married Jacob Beck, a fellow "Badenser"; they had several children, the most famous of whom was Sir Adam Beck, founder of Ontario Hydro. Another sister, Stephanie, married Adam Warnock, founder of the Galt Knitting Company.

Wilhelm arrived in Preston in 1850. He soon set up his own business with his friend and partner, George Randall. The two young men built Granite Mill at the corner of Erb and Caroline Street in Waterloo - first to grind flour but more and more as a distillery. However, by the late 1860s Wilhelm grew restless. By now married

to a woman of Scottish origin and father of two children (a third having died in infancy), he was drawn back to Baden, his home. He sold his shares in the distillery to a young friend by the name of Joseph Seagram who would build his distillery empire on this foundation and marry Wilhelm's niece, Stephanie Urbs of Alsace.

Wilhelm returned to a changed Europe. A naturalized British subject, he nevertheless served as a medic in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and witnessed the birth of the German state. Yet the bonds to his new home, Canada, were never broken. Increasingly Hespeler became involved in efforts to recruit German immigrants for the Dominion. By 1872 he was cooperating with Canadian Immigration Agent Jacob Klotz and agents of the Allen shipping line in recruiting potential migrants in the new German provinces of Alsace and Lorraine. In due course Wilhelm was appointed Special Emigration Agent for Germany by the Canadian government.

Through the Russian Count Menchikov, who owned a castle in Baden, Wilhelm learnt that some German-speaking Mennonites in Southern Russia were desperately looking for a new home. He promptly informed the Canadian government of this promising group of agriculturalists and was instructed to visit their colonies. Despite his wife's grave illness at the time, Wilhelm set out on his Russian mission in July 1872. (to be continued)

Note: Angelika and Emily are planning to write a biography of Hespeler and his family. Please contact us with any information about the Hespelers.

**G-C**

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## Graduate Studies in German-Canadiana

There are a number of graduate students in the field of German-Canadian Studies. Many are pursuing immigration topics and contributing to the knowledge that we have about German-Canadians. As in any field, graduate students contribute new insights by looking at history from a perspective that established historians do not. To promote communication between graduate students, and to inform researchers of the interesting topics being investigated, we have contacted several students, and have asked them to describe their work. If we missed anyone, please let us know, and we will include them in the next issue.

### Annemieke Hoekstra

I am pursuing a Master's Degree in History at the University of Groningen (Holland). The topic of my thesis is German emigration to Canada in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. So far, I have examined the German overseas emigration to North America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, so that I would get a good idea of what made Germans leave their homes to seek happiness in the "New World". Then I took a closer look at the German emigration to Canada, giving a historical overview.

What remains to be done is research into the extent to which these immigrants kept their German culture and to what extent they assimilated. For this I plan to narrow my studies to the Kitchener/Waterloo-area in Ontario.

If people want to contact me (which I would like to encourage, since I think we can all learn from each other and each other's experiences) the best way would be by e-mail.

Helperweststraat 12  
9721 BR, Groningen  
The Netherlands.  
E-mail: a\_hoekstra@hotmail.com

### Grant Grams

I am enrolled at the University of Marburg located in Marburg, Hessen, Germany, where I am pursuing my Ph.D. in modern German History. My advisor is Dr. Prof. Peter Krueger. The topic of my Doctorate is "The Role of German Culture Organisations in the Emigration to Canada during the Weimar Republic". These Organisations are Auswaertiges Amt, Reichwanderungsamt, Verein fuer das Deutschtum in Ausland and Deutsche Ausland Institut. All of these organisations were in some way affiliated with the German Government.

I plan to examine each institution with respect to its advice regarding emigration to Canada, and with respect to the relationship between these organisations. The rivalry between the German and Canadian Governments regarding potential German Emigrants also plays a role in my work. Please feel free to contact me via e-mail.

E-mail: Grams@Stud-Mailer.Uni-Marburg.de

### Ron Schmalz

I am working towards a Ph.D. degree in Canadian and Central European History at the University of Ottawa. The topic I am researching is reflected in the title of my thesis: "Enemy Aliens Come to Canada: Ottawa and the Post-War German Immigration Boom, 1947-1958". I intend to build on work already undertaken in this field for the period 1947 to 1950 and to break some new ground for the post-1950 period.

The principal source of information for this study is records of government departments, voluntary agencies and other interested organizations. This source will be complemented by interviews of individuals involved in this stage of German immigration. I would appreciate receiving all information about government attitudes, influences and policies affecting German immigration to Canada.

I prefer to be contacted at my e-mail address, but for those without Internet access, my mailing address is:

1925 Ashmont Street  
Orléans, Ontario  
K1C 7B9.  
E-mail: schmalzr@inac.gc.ca

### Martin Suckow

I am working on my Master Degree in German Studies (Linguistics) at the University of Cologne/Germany. My topic is "Interference in the mother-tongue of German-speaking immigrants in Victoria and Vancouver, B.C."

I recorded 34 interviews with immigrants who came to Canada between 1950 and 1970 to find out about the number and type of interference phenomena. In a questionnaire I asked questions about the 'linguistic background' of my interviewees (like the language they speak to their partners or friends, the language they use to write in, the language they prefer in certain situations and so on). The aim of my project is to compare these parameters with the linguistic data I recorded in the interviews

and to examine the connections. For instance, do German immigrants with English-speaking partners have more interference phenomena? Do German immigrants coming to Canada in the 50s have more interference phenomena than those from the 60s?

I may be contacted by e-mail or by regular mail at:  
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56626 Andernach  
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## Annette Puckhaber

In 1996 I completed the research essay for my teacher's degree at the University of Trier. It was called "A Paradise for Few: German-speaking Emigration to Canada during the National Socialist Period" and dealt with German Jewish refugees, Sudeten German refugees and German internees in Canada. I have now decided to expand on this topic by exploring the experiences of these migrants. Under the supervision of Professor Lutz Raphael and the direction of Professor Gerhard Bassler at Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland, I will distribute and evaluate questionnaires and conduct personal interviews. I would be grateful for any information about surviving immigrants of that time period. Please contact me at puck3201@uni-trier.de



## Barbara Lorezkowski: Scholarship Recipient

The National Archives in Ottawa not only preserve the treasures of Canada's historical record, but also offer researchers a scenic view of the Ottawa River. However, for Barbara Lorezkowski, this panorama presents a rare treat. For most of the day, our first scholarship recipient is working in the dark microfilm reading room, her head bent over faded copies of German-language newspapers. Here, she delves into the world of nineteenth-century German Canadians and listens to their stories on German-language schooling and singing festivals.



"My work explores the cultural identities of German immigrants in Canada and the United States," Barbara explains. Which cultural messages did girls and

boys learn in German-language schools in Waterloo County (Canada) and Erie County (United States) in the years 1850-1910? Why and how did their parents and communities establish these schools? In which ways, finally, did singing festivals contribute to creating a bond between immigrant communities in North America? These are just some of the questions that the 28-year-old with the easy smile intends to pursue.

It has been only a few years since Barbara 'discovered' history. Before she arrived in Canada in August 1995, she had been working for German and European media and received a M.A. degree in journalism at the University of Dortmund, Germany. Now, she has found a new home in the History Department at the University of Ottawa where she received her M.A. in history in 1996 and is now pursuing a doctoral degree: "The wonderful thing about my department is that we have this incredible group of graduate students. We try to attend each other's conference presentations, discuss and criticize each other's work, and simply share our enthusiasm about our findings."

Barbara's enthusiasm about history has not gone unnoticed. She not only received a prestigious Government of Canada Award but also two Ontario Graduate Scholarships. Her publications include articles in *A Chorus of Different Voices: German-Canadian Identities* (1998) and the *Canadian Historical Review*. She has presented papers at two conferences and is affiliated with the Canadian Families Project whose database on the 1901 census presents an invaluable resource for her research. Thanks to our grant, Barbara has spent the month of April in Waterloo County, this time bending her head over children's diaries, school reports, and photographs.



### Oral History Project

The Chair in German-Canadian Studies and the Multicultural History Society of Ontario have signed a memorandum of agreement initiating a joint oral history project. Funded by the Chair and supervised by the MHSO, a trained researcher will collect and tape the life stories of a broad range of German-speaking immigrants and their descendants in Ontario. The first stage of the project will concentrate on the wider Toronto area. The tapes will be available to researchers through the Chair or the MHSO. The Chair is hoping for future cooperation with similar organizations to collect life stories in other provinces. If you live in the Toronto area and are willing to tell your life story please contact the MHSO at (416) 979-2973 or go to their web site at <http://www.utoronto.ca/mhso/>

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## The Canadian Centre for German and European Studies

By Mark Webber

Scholars and students with an interest in the interdisciplinary study of contemporary Germany in its European context will be delighted by the recent opening of The Canadian Centre for German and European Studies/Le Centre canadien d'études allemandes et européennes. Established after a nationwide competition among Canada's foremost universities, the Centre is a cooperative initiative of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the Université de Montréal and York University. The Centre, with offices in both Montréal and Toronto, is up and running after its official inauguration in November 1997.

The Centre has three principal goals:

To educate the next generation of Canadian experts on Germany and Europe. Both universities offer a special Graduate Diploma in German and European Studies. Graduates may pursue a professional career in the academy, government, business, journalism or the cultural or non-governmental sectors.

To stimulate and conduct research on Germany and Europe, especially in areas where Canadian and European interest intersect. These include: migration and ethnic studies, globalization and regionalization, security issues, cultural studies, and conflict and integration in Europe.

To promote educated social awareness in Canada of German and European issues. This involves outreach to the private sector, the media and schools across Canada, including sponsorship of special seminars, lecture series and meetings for students teachers and professionals. The Centre will also establish and maintain contacts with key individuals and institutions in Canada and abroad.

In the words of Lloyd Axworthy, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Centre is a "model of cooperation among institutions, and is a major asset ... for all of Canada. This partnership between the Université de Montréal and York University will help to raise Canada's international profile."

The strong partnership aspect of the Centre is reinforced through the creation of an active network of affiliated universities in Canada and Germany. The Canadian network already includes links to McGill University (Montréal), Queen's University (Kingston, Ontario), the University of Alberta (Edmonton, Alberta), and the University of Victoria (British Columbia). Partnerships also exist with the universities of Konstanz, Mainz, Mannheim, and Berlin (Free University).

In addition, the Centre is allied with similar centres and institutes in the United States (Georgetown University, Harvard University and the University of California at Berkeley) and in the United Kingdom (University of Birmingham).

### Contact Information:

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Web site: <http://www.fas.umontreal.ca/cceae/>



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## German-Canadian Grant for Manitoban Research

Among the scholarships and grants that the Chair in German-Canadian Studies offers is a grant for research regarding German-Canadians in Manitoba. 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 before October 1, 1998** for projects carried out in the fall and winter of 1998.

Each research grant will be awarded on a competitive basis. The candidates 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.

Information on other scholarships and grants can be obtained on our web site at:

<http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/~germcan/Scholarship.html>.

For further information on this grant and for application forms, please contact Kathy Bent, Assistant to the Chair in German-Canadian Studies:

The University of Winnipeg,  
515 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB  
R3B 2E9  
Phone: (204) 786-9797  
Fax: (204) 783-8910  
E-mail: [kathy.bent@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:kathy.bent@uwinnipeg.ca)



## TransCoop Program Changed

**T**he German-American Academic Council Foundation (GAAC) is changing the 1998 TransCoop program! The application deadline, for TransCoop projects that can begin no earlier than April 1999, is October 30, 1998. This was changed from projects starting after November 1998 and an application deadline of June 30, 1998.

The GAAC, in cooperation with the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation awards the TransCoop Program grants for transatlantic research cooperation among and between German, American and/or Canadian scholars (Ph.D. required) in the humanities, social sciences, economics and law. The amount granted by TransCoop must be matched by funds from U.S. or Canadian sources but can be applied to a variety of projects.

For more information contact:

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Web site: <http://www.gaac.org/transco.html>



## Obituary: John Halstead (1922 -1998)

The last time I saw John Halstead was in Ottawa last November. He did what he liked best: he participated in a conference on Canada's foreign policy, both listening to what others had to say and sharing his own, singularly perspicacious insights. He introduced my paper and me, a junior scholar, in a respectful and yet touchingly personal manner: John and I had met on several occasions and he had always taken an interest in my career and my life. He did not have to: he knew many people who were far more important than I. But John did not make these distinctions.



John Halstead was known to every student of German-Canadian relations and to the entire Canadian Studies community in German-speaking countries. Born in Vancouver in 1922, John had his first exposure to Germany as member of the RCNVR from 1943 to 1946. He then joined the Department of External Affairs where he served as Assistant and Deputy Under-Secretary from 1971 to 1975. In 1975 he was appointed Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany; it was in this capacity that John was instrumental in developing Canadian Studies, assisting in the establishment of the Gesellschaft für Kanada-Studien and initiating the annual Grainau conference.

Even after he had moved to the position of Canada's Permanent Representative to NATO in 1980 and from there into teaching, research and consulting, John's interest in Germany and German-Canadian relations never waned. He practised his German whenever possible, published articles on the new Germany and Canadian cultural policy in Germany and tried to stimulate interest in European matters at a time when both practitioners and academics in Canada were turning their backs on that continent.

In the end, time ran out too fast. We all wanted to hear more, read more, get one more chance to talk to him. It is comforting to know that his legacy will live on. But I will miss him.

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# German-Canadian Studies Web Page

by Frederik Jonker

The German-Canadian web site has been updated again! Several new pages have been added. These include a page called "Sights and Sounds of the German-Canadian Experience" (Multimedia Gallery) displaying historical photographs and - in the future - excerpts from the oral history project; and a page of German-Canadian links. This page has links to German-Canadian sites, research sites, German-American sites and links to sources of research and graduate funding. Please inform us if you know of more web sites relevant to German-Canadian Studies.

Our Newsletter section is also now complete. It includes the important sections of past issues in the Archives section, and includes the most recent Newsletters in both HTML and Adobe Acrobat PDF format. Next on the agenda is an update of the bibliography and additional photos for the Multimedia Gallery. Please send any feedback to [german-canadian@iname.com](mailto:german-canadian@iname.com), and if you have not been able to visit our site yet, you will find it located at <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/~germcan/> Visit it soon!



## In the Next Issue . . .

The next issue of the German-Canadian Studies Newsletter will be published in the Fall of 1998. It will feature the Hystery promised for this issue - on how Lunenburg, Nova Scotia became a typical British settlement - which could not be published due to time and space constraints. The next issue will also feature:

- A continuation of our investigation of Wilhelm Hespeler in "The Who's Who in German-Canadian History" series;
- The Berczy settlers;
- The Max-Kade Institute in Madison;
- And much more!!! Don't miss it!
- In your mailbox October, 1998!



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## Acknowledgements

The photograph of the settlers from St. Andrews at the Canadian Pacific Railway Festival, June 1928 (page 1) and the photo of Wilhelm Hespeler (page 3) are taken from the Western Canada Pictorial Index.

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### Publication Details

Editor: Angelika Sauer  
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Volume 3, Issue 1.  
Spring 1998

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