

---

# German-Canadian Studies Newsletter

---

Volume 3, Issue 2 • Fall 1998

## Editorial

### Growing Interest.....

German-Canadian Studies is, unfortunately, not a “hot item” on the average Canadian student’s list of priorities. Whether this is because of the narrow boundaries of this field, the ambiguous status of ethnic studies in our universities or a general lack of interest in Canada’s past is open to discussion. However, as previous newsletters have demonstrated, there are some students, undergraduates and postgraduates, who take up topics in German-Canadian Studies. The demand for our graduate scholarships has been growing, and high-quality research is now being conducted in various disciplines at universities from Newfoundland to British Columbia.

The biggest growth area for German-Canadian Studies lies, not in Canada but in Germany. Germans have an ongoing academic love affair with this country, which is reflected in the membership numbers of the Society for Canadian Studies in German-speaking Countries.

German students love studying our country; and quite naturally, many develop an interest in the links between their own country and Canada. Thanks to a number of exchange programs, such as the DAAD and the Government of Canada Award to Foreign Nationals, many excellent German students have a chance to visit Canada for the purpose of research and study.

Franziska Birke, for example, studies at York University in Toronto. Her research deals with her fellow students who are of German descent and take German history, language or culture classe. She poses questions about self-image and identity of young German-Canadians. Alexander Freund, who is completing his disser-

tation at Bremen University, is equally interested in identity and meaning. He examines the emigrants of the 1940s and 1950s and their decisions to leave and relocate, asking what role migration plays in their life stories and how they construct their identity around this experience.

Annette Puckhaber and Ulrich Frisse (photo) met at Memorial University in Newfoundland. They share an interest in German-Canadian topics although they did not know each other, or of each other, before they came to Canada. Annette studies at the University of Trier and



is doing her dissertation on German-speaking immigrants and refugees in Canada between 1933 and 1945. Ulrich hails from Philipps University in Marburg and is completing a doctoral thesis on the local elites of the German settlements of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia and Berlin/Kitchener, Ontario. What brought them to Memorial was the expertise of Dr. Gerhard Bassler, an established scholar in the field.

What all these students have in common is an interest in the history of German-speaking people in Canada. Their research will enrich this field tremendously. Unfortunately, most of their findings will not be available to a general Eng-

lish-speaking audience in Canada - and this includes the vast majority of Canadian undergraduate students. Ways have to be found to disseminate German research and make it accessible in our classrooms.

You will notice that this newsletter features a number of items which deal with 18th and 19th century German-Canadian history. There is a trend among students to be interested mostly in the recent past - events that happened within the past generation. On the other hand, a burgeoning group of amateur genealogists often find ways to trace their family roots back several gen-

Continued on page 3

---

## Who's Who In German-Canadian History: Wilhelm Hespeler (*continued*)

By Angelika Sauer, with research by Emily Stokes-Rees

**H**espeler's trip to Russia to recruit German-speaking settlers for the new Dominion of Canada in the summer of 1872 ended in both professional triumph and personal tragedy. Hespeler was able to escape the Russian police and to convince several groups of Mennonites to choose Canada as their new home. Yet, upon his return to Germany, his ailing wife died and left him with two young children.

The truncated Hespeler family started a new life in Winnipeg, the western outpost of the new nation. In Winnipeg, fortunes were to be made and to be lost, but Hespeler was a prudent man who speculated wisely and slowly built a sizable fortune on the basis of rural and urban real estate, grain sales, mortgages and loans. All the while he served as the Dominion Immigration Agent, a post which his Conservative Party connections and success in Russia had earned him. He left his mark not only on the Mennonite settlements of Manitoba but also the Icelandic and Jewish communities.

Hespeler was a civic minded man and quite heavily involved in the affairs of his community. Twice in the 1870s he was elected as an alderman to the Winnipeg City Council. He served on the board of the Winnipeg General Hospital and became its president in 1889. During the smallpox epidemic of 1876-1877 he was a member of the Council of Keewatin.

Not enjoying life as a bachelor and as a single father, Hespeler married Mary Meyer, a German Canadian from Ontario, in 1875. It was through her that Hespeler rediscovered his German ethnicity. He participated in the first German singing and social clubs in 1870s Winnipeg, helped establish a German-Lutheran congregation (Trinity) and was instrumental in setting up the German-language newspaper *Der Nordwesten* in 1889. In 1882 he was appointed honorary consul for Germany - a position he held until 1907. In 1902 he was rewarded with the German Order of the Red Eagle.



Personal heartbreak remained a part of his life. His son Alfred married a girl in Colorado and moved West. His second wife passed away after only eight years of marriage. His 23-year old daughter died after giving birth in December 1887, leaving her baby girl with the young father, Augustus Nanton. Hespeler had many acquaintances among Winnipeg's elites and an extended family of nephews and nieces in Ontario, but he was a lonely man until he married Kate, the sister of his first wife.

Yet life held one more professional triumph in store for the rotund, stoic German Canadian. At age 69 he was elected to the provincial parliament in the rural Mennonite seat of Rosenfeld; and on 29 March 1900 he became Speaker of the Manitoba Legislature - the first non-British-born person in the entire British Empire to achieve such a position. He resigned from his political career in 1904.

Retirement started comfortably enough but was rudely interrupted by the war. Hespeler's German connec-

tions suddenly tainted the man and his achievements. Undaunted by public hostility Hespeler set out to help recent German immigrants who had lost their jobs. He lived to see the end of the war and the Winnipeg General Strike in 1919. When his third wife died in 1920 he decided to move to Vancouver to be with his son. He died there on 18 April 1921 and was laid to rest in Winnipeg's St. John's Anglican cemetery among the pioneers of Winnipeg. He was soon forgotten.

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

## Books of Interest

**A** *Chorus of Different Voices: German Canadian Identities*, edited by Angelika Sauer and Matthias Zimmer (New York: Peter Lang, 1998) is a collection of essays representing new research on the topic of German Canadians. Scholars over the past decades have struggled to explain the relative invisibility of Germans in Canadian society and in the Canadian historical memory. However, they have taken for granted that there is a German-Canadian ethnic group with a distinct culture. The contributors to this volume, who represent several disciplines, question this assumption and take a fresh look at definitions of German Canadians and the processes of identity formation. The result is a kaleidoscopic image of German-Canadian identities, past and present. The book can be ordered for US\$44.95 (plus \$3 shipping and handling) from:

Peter Lang Publishing  
275 Seventh Avenue  
28th Floor  
New York, NY  
10001.

**T**he *German-Canadian Yearbook* has published another volume, number 15, to celebrate its 25th anniversary. New editors Karin Guertler and Lothar Zimmermann have produced an interesting mix of articles and reviews, in German, English and French. They also make available primary sources, especially Karl-Müller Grote's account *Onkel Karl: Deutschkanadische Lebensbilder*, first published in 1924, on the life of German settlers in Ontario. Unfortunately, my students will once again complain that this source is not available in English translation.

**G-C**

Continued from page 1

erations. Future academic research will have to try to integrate both: the direct relevance of the immediate past and the willingness to cope with a more obscure distant past.

The Chair in German-Canadian Studies tries to serve as a focal point for the research efforts of an increasingly international community of scholars. We certainly hope that the students in Europe will continue to share their enthusiasm and expertise with their Canadian counterparts. Who knows, maybe it is infectious!

**G-C**

## A Note for Genealogists:

**T**hose researching their roots in the area commonly known as Volhynia (within the present boundaries of Poland and the western portion of Ukraine) will be interested to learn about the new "Society for German Genealogy in Eastern Europe" (SGGEE).

Starting in the mid-19th century, many ethnic Germans who had lived in the central areas of Poland began a further migration eastward to an area often referred to as Volhynia. Later in the century, many of these people and their descendants migrated to North and South America.

One of the major aims of SGGEE is to provide databases and links to databases which trace these families and their movements. They can be found on the SGGEE web site. The society will also publish a quarterly SGGEE Journal in traditional paper format for all you "techno-peasants" out there. Details regarding membership may be obtained by visiting the web site or by writing to

SGGEE  
P.O.Box 72074  
Calgary AB  
T2V 5H9.  
Web Site: <http://www.sggee.org>

**G-C**

### In this issue . . .

Editorial .....	1
Who's Who In German-Canadian History: Wilhelm Hespeler (continued) .....	2
Books of Interest .....	3
A Note for Genealogists: .....	3
HYSTERY (A Historical Mystery): .....	4
How Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, became a "typical British settlement" .....	4
The Bremen Archives and German-Canadian Studies .....	5
The Berczy Settlers .....	5
The Selkirk Project .....	7
Canadian Centre for Austrian and Central European Studies .....	7
The CHIN Germany-Canada School Project ....	7
Update: The German-Albertans Project .....	7
German-Canadian Studies Web Page .....	8
In the Next Issue . . . ..	8
Looking for German-Canadian Images .....	8
A Note of Apology: .....	8

# HYSTERY (A Historical Mystery): How Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, became a “typical British settlement”

In 1996, UNESCO designated Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, a World Heritage Site. The reason for the citation was Lunenburg’s status as the best-preserved example of British colonization and settlement patterns in North America.

*Excuse me?*

Anybody interested in German-Canadian history might be forgiven for doing a double take at this point. Lunenburg - a British settlement? Who does not know that Lunenburg was settled in the 1750s by German-speaking immigrants from Southwestern Germany and Switzerland? Who is not aware of the success story of these landlocked peasant who became skilled fishermen on the coast of Nova Scotia?

Well, things are never that simple. Different people find different meaning in historical events; and as new research unearths hitherto unknown facts, our picture changes.

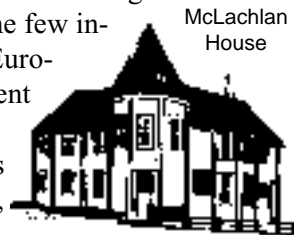
We already know that the so-called “Foreign Protestants” were recruited by the colonial British authorities to counterbalance the neutral French-speaking Catholic Acadians and help claim the land from a dwindling but understandably hostile Mi’kmaq population. We know that many settlers, especially single young men, left Nova Scotia for New England or French Ile Royale

(now Cape Breton). We know that the groups that were recruited included, explicit instructions to the contrary, a sizable number of French-speakers and about 40 Catholics.



But *British*? How did Lunenburg become British? The answer lies in the vantage point. Lunenburg was planned by the British authorities as a model town with a formal gridiron of streets and blocks (each with 14 house lots), and allowances for public spaces and fortifications. Old Town Lunenburg’s streetscape has remained virtually unchanged and many original 18th century wood buildings are still standing. Hence, Lunenburg is one of the few intact examples of a planned European/ British colonial settlement in North America.

One might argue that it is the colonists, not the colonizers, who gave the settlement its content, culture, and tradition. One might further wonder how a plan and a formal structure imposed on the landscape represent human heritage more distinctly than the lives lived in those streets over centuries. One might even question whether we should celebrate European colonization which claimed the lives of so many natives as well as poor settlers. Or one might simply be happy that a bit of our history, however controversial, will be protected and preserved. Your choice!



McLachlan House



Smith House (1883)



Images courtesy of Parks Canada





## The Bremen Archives and German-Canadian Studies

by Alexander Freund

The official records and manuscript collections located in the Bremen State Archives date from the 18th Century to the late 1950s. They include government and administrative documents (e.g. Senate Commissioner for Emigration), records of non-governmental organizations (e.g. Emigration Advisory Bureau), publications, and collections of private persons. Pertinent particularly to the German overseas migration from the 18th Century onward, the records also contain information regarding emigration via Bremen and Bremerhaven (transit migration) from other European countries, return migration, and migration within Europe, within and into Germany.

Particularly for the war- and postwar years, the archives' holdings furnish research on forced migratory movements, such as forced labor (e.g. Displaced Persons 1945-1952), war refugees (e.g. ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe 1944-50s), political refugees (e.g. Hungarians 1956ff). Genealogical research is possible — to a limited extent: All passenger lists dating from before 1945 have been destroyed.

The best way to find out what's in the Bremen archives is to consult the *Inventar der Quellen zur Geschichte der Wanderungen, besonders der Auswanderung*, in *Bremer Archiven*, compiled by Peter Marschalck (*Veroeffentlichungen aus dem Staatsarchiv der Freien Hansestadt Bremen*, ed. by Wilhelm Luehrs; vol. 53). Bremen: Selbstverlag des Staatsarchivs der Freien Hansestadt Bremen, 1980.

For further information, researchers should contact Dr. Hofmeister. He will be able to tell you about planned closures or changed hours. You can contact him at the archives:

Staatsarchiv Bremen  
Am Staatsarchiv 1, 28203  
Bremen, Germany  
Phone: 01149-421-361-6226  
Fax: 01149-421-361-10247.  
Website: [www.bremen.de/info/skp/StArchiv/StArchiv.htm](http://www.bremen.de/info/skp/StArchiv/StArchiv.htm)

The archives are open at the following times:

Mondays: Closed  
Tuesdays and Wednesdays: 9 am-4 pm  
Thursdays: 9 am - 8 pm  
Fridays: 9 am - 3 pm  
The building is wheelchair accessible.

While in Bremen, another helpful institution might be the German Emigration Museum:

Deutsches Auswanderermuseum  
Inselstrasse 6, 27568  
Bremerhaven, Germany  
Phone & Fax: 01149-471-49096.

If you wish to contact the author he can be reached at the following addresses:

E-mail: [a.freund@im-inter.net](mailto:a.freund@im-inter.net)  
E-mail: [alexander.freund@hamburg.netsurf.de](mailto:alexander.freund@hamburg.netsurf.de)




---



---

## The Berczy Settlers

William Moll Berczy of Wallerstein near Noerdlingen, Germany, was an artist, teacher and land speculator who, in 1794, brought a group of approximately 200 German settlers to Markham Township, Upper Canada, via New York. He undertook to clear and cultivate land and build a road from Lake Ontario to Lake Simcoe (today's Yonge Street). The idea of a large German colony eventually failed when the township was opened for general immigration a few years later but the Berczy settlers nevertheless left a lasting legacy.

In 1997-8, fourth year Carleton University history student David Barclay, under the supervision of Dr. Bruce Elliott, researched the fate of these settlers, using the original settler list, available census information and 19th century directories and registers. He noted a large settler decline in the first generation, with 15 of the original 67 surnames having disappeared in 1804 (through either out-migration or intermarriage) and an additional 25 missing by 1837. Only 19 names of the original group can be found in the 1871 census, and in 1901, only three members of the last 17 families still spoke German. The data further revealed that while the original settlers tended to marry within the group, the second generation overwhelmingly (119 out of 149 marriages) married "outsiders."

For further information on this research, and the Berczy settlers, please contact the Markham Berczy Settlers Association at:

Markham Berczy Settlers Association  
10292 McCowan Road  
Markham ON  
L3P 3J3.

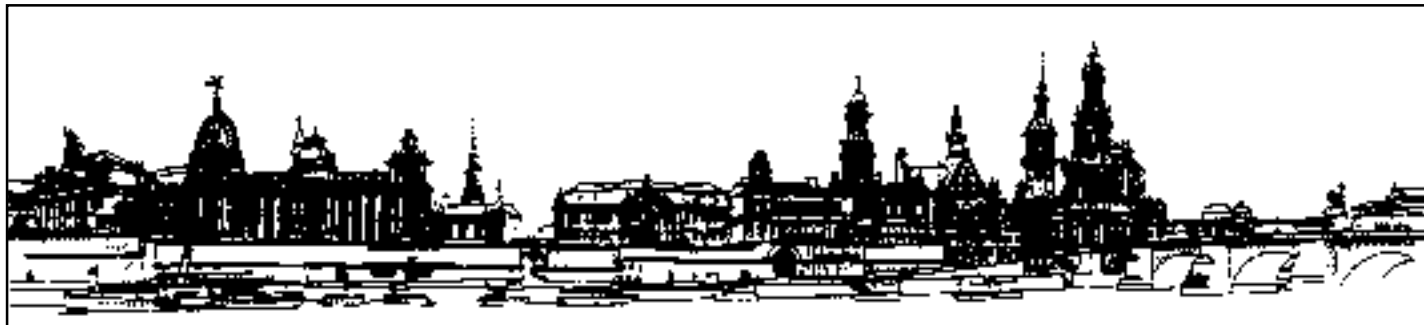


## Supplement for the readers of the German-Canadian Studies Newsletter

Dresdner  
Stadtjubiläum  
**2006**

### The city of Dresden in Germany looks for places with the same name

In the USA and in Canada there is a larger number of urbane, historical and geographical places with the name "Dresden". German emigrants spread the name of their old home town. But the name was also given to settlements recently founded for administrative purpose. Today many of the little places are no longer independent communities as a result of integration into bigger administration units. Some of them can still be found under the postal addition "rural". Another part probably has disappeared from newer maps and may only exist in local or historical concept. Probably there are still some Dresden - places, which bear another name today. In Saxon Dresden there is a great interest in investigating the story of these Dresden places and their traditions.



The Saxon capital Dresden celebrates its 800th anniversary in 2006. The organization "Dresden City Anniversary 2006" for the preparation and execution of the celebrations was founded in 1997. President of the organization is the Lord Mayor Dr. H. Wagner. Members are Dresden citizens, friends of the city of Dresden in the world, also organizations, institutions and well-known companies. A attractive contribution to the anniversary is the topic "All of Dresdens of this world", because hardly any documents are found about when and where the name Dresden was spread all over the world.

#### The "Dresden" in North America:

Only 3 places named "Dresden" are known today in Canada. But up to now 27 places in the USA and 36 on the whole world could be found in German libraries. These "Dresdens" were found

on modern and electronic data carriers but also with the help of old maps and atlases. (Hammond, NY 1949, Atlas Of The World, Stieler's Hand Atlas /1929, Place Name Directories, Commercial Atlas And Marketing Guide/1979, CD-ROM: MAP-Expert 2.0/North America, GNIS, Omni Gazetteers).

At the end of this century it is an interesting task to snatch these mostly very small Dresden-places from oblivion. At the same time a piece of common German - American and German - Canadian history should be preserved by an extensive documentation and new connections shall arise between the "Dresdens" all over the world.

#### Who can help?

The "Organization Dresden City Anniversary 2006" asks for support with the research of the history of "Dresden"-

places in Canada and of addresses in or near these places. On the basis of intensive contacts and information a German camera team will then go to these "Dresdens" in Canada within the next years and to make film/TV reports. It would be a great result if we could welcome many guests from all of these "Dresdens" and particularly from the USA and from Canada to our city in 2006. Up to now there haven't been any personal or official contacts to the USA and to Canada yet.

We are only at the beginning of a very interesting and hopefully beneficial cooperation. Perhaps students at universities can also be entrusted with different tasks about history and presentation of the Dresden places within their studies and classes. Suggestions for topics can be provided.

### The results of the previous enquiry for Dresden-places in the area of Canada

No.	Place	Geogr. coordinates	State	County	Information
1	Dresden	42°34N; 82°17W	Ontario	Bothwell, (Distrikt)	(2060 Ew.)
2	Dresden-Station	42°35N; 82°10W	Ontario	Bothwell, (Distrikt)	
3	Dresden-Mountain	51°03N; 124°10W	BC		sw. Chilko-Lake, geogr.

Who wants to help? Please write to the address in Germany :  
"Verein Dresdner Stadtjubiläum 2006"

Gert Bürgel, Darmstädter Str. 46, D - 01159 Dresden, Fax + 49-351-418 4345, E-mail: gert.buergel@gmx.de

## The Selkirk Project

Private American researcher Maralyn A. Wellauer has been collecting data on a select group of early Swiss emigrants who left Europe in 1821 and traveled together to Lord Selkirk's colony on the Red River (near present-day Winnipeg). Beginning in 1823, entire families relocated to areas in the Minnesota and Wisconsin territories, Illinois and Missouri. Others remained in the colony until 1826, when they too left for the United States.

The project focuses on a core group of 10 Swiss families with the following surnames: *Aebersold, Chatelain, Hofmann, Marchand, Monnier, Quinche, Rindisbacher, Scheidegger, Schirner, Stramm*. The emigrant party also included a number of professional soldiers attached to the de Meuron and de Watteville regiments: *Bain (Bane, Bayne), Bruechler (Brickler), Ehrler (Erler), Fournier, Gerber, Langet, Ostertag, Paquet (Paquette), Schmid (Schmidt) and Verring (Varing)*.

Ms. Wellauer is most interested in evaluating extant primary source material relating to the migrations to identify the individual members of the group by name, age, occupation and social status; and to determine the fate of the families. Of particular interest are personal accounts contained in contemporary letters, diaries and colonial papers.

Please contact Ms. Wellauer, the editor of "The Swiss Connection" at:

2845 North 72nd Street

Milwaukee WI

53210, USA.

E-mail: [swissmiss@execpc.com](mailto:swissmiss@execpc.com)



## Canadian Centre for Austrian and Central European Studies

A joint initiative by the Austrian Canadian Council and the Austrian Embassy in Ottawa has led to the formal establishment of the new centre at the University of Alberta in Edmonton in September 1998. The university has appointed Dr Franz Szabo (formerly Professor of History at Carleton University) as Director of the Centre. CCAuCES will offer undergraduate courses in Austrian history and culture and expand the capacity for Austrian and Habsburg studies at the graduate level. The centre will be enriched by visiting professorships, partnerships with Austrian universities, and cooperation with the Center for Austrian Studies in Minneapolis. It will sponsor symposia, conferences, cultural events and publication.



## The CHIN Germany-Canada School Project

The Ottawa-based Canadian Heritage Information Network is mounting a virtual exhibition highlighting the relationship of Germany and Canada from the past to the present. This project will be showcased at Expo 2000 in Hanover, Germany.

The exhibition will be produced through the collaboration of school children in both countries, with partnerships between German and Canadian schools and cultural institutions. Project coordination is provided by Germany's Schulen ans Netz and CHIN, with support from the federal Youth Employment Strategy within the Department of Canadian Heritage's Young Canada Works Internship program.

For more information please visit the "As it happens" section of <http://www.chin.gc.ca> or write to CHIN at:

15 Eddy Street, 4th floor

Hull PQ

K1A 0M5



## Update: The German-Albertans Project

Dr. Manfred Prokop in Edmonton reports progress on the project to compile a comprehensive inventory of all sources on Albertan-Germans. A database of approximately 620 entries of mostly primary source material (newspapers, books, audiotapes, photographs) complete with abstracts, cross-references and standardized keywords already exists. About 600 other sources available in university and public libraries are currently being checked for their relevance and entered into the ProCite database. Dr Prokop expects to be visiting local archives and museums in the spring of 1999 to check for holdings of materials of various kinds. The ProCite database will eventually be available for researchers on the internet.

This project is funded in part by the Chair in German-Canadian Studies, but is made possible by Dr. Prokop generously volunteering his time. Please contact him at (403) 467-6273 if you have any local leads, or write to [Manfred.Prokop@ualberta.ca](mailto:Manfred.Prokop@ualberta.ca)



---

# German-Canadian Studies Web Page

by Frederik Jonker

The German-Canadian web site has been updated again! Our "Sights and Sounds of the German-Canadian Experience" (Multimedia Gallery) has a few more photos, and of course the newsletter portion of the site contains a new newsletter. In addition we have changed a few links and will soon be adding a link to H-GAGCS. Please let us know if there are more web sites relevant to German-Canadian Studies.

In the immediate future we will be updating the bibliography. Please send any feedback on the web site as well as additional links to [german-canadian@iname.com](mailto:german-canadian@iname.com). 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!

## Looking for German-Canadian Images

If you live in Western Canada and have old photos which depict any aspects of German-Canadian life in the past, please let us preserve them and make them available to researchers. The originals will be returned to you. Please contact the Western Canada Pictorial Index at (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).

## In the Next Issue . . .

The next issue of the German-Canadian Studies news letter will be published in the summer of 1999, featuring:

- A conference on "Germans and Indians";
- Thalia Germanica - the world's a stage!;
- Who's Who: Gerhard Herzberg (in memoriam);
- announcing H-GAGCS;
- and much more!!! Don't miss it!



## A Note of Apology:

Writing and producing this newsletter is a time-consuming task. Unfortunate delays result. Thank you for your patience!

### Publication Details

Editor: Angelika Sauer  
Production: Frederik Jonker  
© Chair in German-Canadian Studies,  
The University of Winnipeg  
515 Portage Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB  
R3B 2E9

Phone: (204) 786-9007

Fax: (204) 772-0472

E-mail: [sauer@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:sauer@uwinnipeg.ca)

Web Page: <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/~germcan/>

Volume 3, Issue 2.

Fall 1998

This newsletter will be published on a regular basis. Please help us to 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 inform us.