

German-Canadian Studies Newsletter

Volume 5, Issue 1

Fall 2002

For Your Calendar:

Katherine
Martens To Speak
About Letters of
Love and Despair

Thursday, 19
September 2002
Univ. of Winnipeg
Faculty Club
See last page!

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Editorial

Alexander Freund

You may have already heard the news: The Chair in German-Canadian Studies at the University of Winnipeg is no longer vacant. I took up the position on May 1 and immediately began to experience 'Friendly Manitoba' at the German-Canadian Studies Foundation's Welcome Evening at the UW's Eckardt-Grammate-Hall on May 9. For those of you who could not attend this event, I would like to briefly sketch my goals and visions for the Chair.

The mandate of the Chair in German-Canadian Studies encompasses three areas of activity: teaching, research, and community relations.

While I will develop initiatives in all three fields, let me

tell you a bit about one of my specialisations, one which covers and integrates them all: oral history.

Oral history in the classroom has been a success story at both the school and university level, especially in seminars on ethnic and migration history. In the next few years, my students will learn the practice of history in part by interviewing immigrants and their descendants, transcribing the interviews, and archiving them for future research.

Another major goal as Chair will be to establish a collection of oral history interviews with and (auto)biographical sources of German-speaking immigrants and their descendants in Canada (see p. 2).

By its very nature as community-centred research, oral history is also a powerful link between the university and the community.

Let me take this opportunity to thank the Chair's Founding Families and the University of Winnipeg, especially the History Department and the Vice President-Academic's Office for bringing me to Winnipeg. Special thanks go to Hans Werner (History) and Linda Dietrick (German Studies) who in the last two years did wonderful work as interim chairs.

I am looking forward to meeting many of you over the next months, and encourage you to use this newsletter as a forum of exchange.

Interim Chair Reviews Successful Past Year

Hans P. Werner, Ph. D.

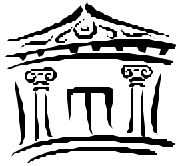
It has been a busy and productive year. My objective as Interim Chair was to begin rejuvenating the program after a period of reduced activity due to the absence of a Chairholder. In keeping with the Chair's three-pronged mandate I taught, conducted research, and organized activities for the German Canadian community.

During this year I have made many new German Canadian acquaintances and widened my contacts in the community of German migration scholars. I have also had the privilege of working together with Professor Alexander Freund for the last few months as he took over the position of permanent Chairholder. This was all very enjoyable and I value the

experiences and relationships that have resulted. At the end of my time as Interim Chair, I am even more persuaded of the importance and enormity of the task. I look forward to a continuing association with the Chair in telling the German Canadian story.

Dr. Hans P. Werner served as Interim Chair in German-Canadian Studies in 2001-2002.

Neues Programm Quellensammlung geplant



Der Plan: Bis 2007 soll eine Oral History und Biographiesammlung aufgebaut werden

Angelika Sauer hat den Lehrstuhl für deutsch-kanadische Studien in ihrer Amtszeit 1995-2000 zu einer erfolgreichen Institution aufgebaut. Mit einem Newsletter, einer Website, einem umfangreichen Stipendienprogramm, einer öffentlichen Vortragsreihe sowie Konferenzen und Veröffentlichungen hat sie den deutsch-kanadischen Studien in Kanada neues Gewicht und ein modernes Image verliehen.

Diesen Erfolg hoffe ich fortzusetzen. Vieles wird deshalb beibehalten: Der Newsletter wird mit dieser Ausgabe wieder regelmäßig erscheinen. Die UW hat zugestimmt, die Webseite des Lehrstuhls als Pilotprojekt für ihr neues Webdesign-Programm zu adoptieren. Stipendien werden wieder vergeben (s. S. 3). Die Vortragsreihe läuft in diesem Monat wieder an (s. S. 4). Konferenzen und Veröffentlichungen werden bald folgen.

Als neues Projekt ist die Errichtung einer "Oral History und Biographiesammlung" geplant. Der Beirat hat diesem Projekt auf seiner Sitzung am 4. Juli 2002 grünes Licht gegeben. In Zusammenarbeit mit regionalen, nationalen und internationalen Partnern soll in den nächsten fünf Jahren eine Quellensammlung geschaffen werden, die Forscher und Forscherinnen aus der ganzen Welt nach Winnipeg bringen wird.

"Students will learn about the history of transatlantic migrations from the 17th century to the present."

Student Enrollment Up

The universities of Manitoba have seen an increase in student enrollment in the new academic year. This has affected the course in German-Canadian Studies taught in the Department of History at the University of Winnipeg. "Canadian Immigration and Settlement" is a course for first-year students and students studying history for the first time. Enrollment

for this course is at the maximum of 40 students, with a handful of students on the waiting list. Students in this course learn three sets of skills: study skills, historical methods, and an understanding of migration as a category of analysis. They will learn about the history of transatlantic migrations from the 17th century to the present. Focusing on Germany as the sending country and

Canada as a receiving country, students will study why people left their home countries at different points in the past, how they organized their migration, what they experienced in their new home land, why they moved on to other countries, returned to Europe, or stayed in Canada. In 2003-2004 students will be able to take advanced third-year seminars in German-Canadian Studies.

Recipes For Research: Bibliography Completed



The bibliography will help researchers of German-Albertan history

After many years of research, Professor Manfred Prokop (University of Alberta) has completed the *Bibliography of the Cultural History of the German-speaking Community in Alberta: 1882-2000*. The online database includes annotated references to 6,500 primary and secondary

sources in Alberta's libraries, archives and private collections. The sources range from books and articles to newspapers, artwork, cooking recipes, church records, letters and oral histories. Initiated by the German-Canadian Association of Alberta, the project was funded in

part by the Chair in German-Canadian Studies. The URL is: <http://www.ualberta.ca/~german/altahistory/>. The bibliography is also available in book form (700 pages) for \$22.50 (+ shipping). Contact: Manfred.Prokop@ualberta.ca.

Fellowship Programme Restarted and Expanded

The German-Canadian Studies Fellowship Programme has been restarted and expanded. Four kinds of financial support are now offered by the Chair.

The **Research Scholarship** Programme offers two annual international graduate research scholarships of \$6,500 (M.A.) and \$8,500 (Ph.D.) to promising young scholars.

Every year, four international **research grants** of up to \$1,000 each are offered to a va-

riety of researchers studying the past and present experiences of German-speaking immigrants and their descendents in Manitoba. Both academic and non-academic researchers as well as community, school, and other collaborative projects are welcome to apply for a grant. There are two competitions each year.

Two annual **Undergraduate Prizes** of \$500 are awarded to UW students with the highest marks in courses relating to

German and German-Canadian culture and history.

A new annual \$500 prize for the best **Undergraduate Essay** on a German-Canadian topic will be awarded for the first time in 2003. The competition is open to all undergraduate students enrolled at a Canadian college or university.

For more information, please contact the Chair in German-Canadian Studies at gcs@uwinnipeg.ca.



Zeitzeugen gesucht: Wer ist vor 1945 gekommen?

Bauhaus und Art Deco, Frauenwahlrecht und Charleston: Die 1920er Jahre gelten als das goldene Jahrzehnt. Für viele Menschen bedeutete die Zeit zwischen den Weltkriegen der Aufbruch in die Fremde. 600,000 Menschen verließen Deutschland; viele gingen nach Übersee. Mit Beginn der Weltwirtschaftskrise kehrten viele desillusioniert zurück. In den 1930ern schlugen Kanada, die USA und andere Einwanderungsländer

die Tore zu. Gleichzeitig versuchten immer mehr Menschen vor faschistischer Verfolgung in Europa zu fliehen. Die sich anbahnende Tragödie erreichte mit der Odyssee der "St. Louis" 1939 einen ersten Höhepunkt. Die wenigen, die danach noch nach Kanada kamen, waren meistens Kriegsgefangene.

Nur wenige Bücher berichten über diese vielfältigen Einwanderungen nach Kanada vor

1945. Eine wichtige Quelle zur Erschließung dieser Geschichte sind Interviews mit Zeitzeugen. Eine Sammlung solcher Interviews soll deshalb in Winnipeg aufgebaut werden (s. S. 2). Wenn Sie vor 1945 nach Kanada gekommen sind und über Ihre Erfahrungen berichten möchten oder wenn Sie mehr zum Interviewablauf oder der Sammlung wissen möchten, kontaktieren Sie bitte den Chair in German-Canadian Studies.

"Eine wichtige Quelle zur Erschließung der Geschichte sind Interviews mit Zeitzeugen."

H-GAGCS To Be Revived

As Chair in German-Canadian Studies I was recently hired on as a voluntary co-editor of the email discussion group H-GAGCS (German American German Canadian Studies). The list is part of H-Net, a worldwide electronic forum for researchers and teachers in

the Humanities and Social Sciences. H-GAGC's main editor is Joseph Salmon of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and the Max Kade Institute. Robert W. Frizzell, Director of Libraries at Northwest Missouri State University, is the list's review editor. Because in past

years the list has suffered from under-use, we hope to revive it by initiating discussions, inviting book and conference reviews, and posting journals' tables-of-content.

To subscribe, go to: <http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/~gagcs>.



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The Chair in German-Canadian Studies was established in 1989 with grants from the Secretary of State's Program for Canadian Ethnic Studies and a group of private philanthropists within the German-Canadian community of Winnipeg. It is located in, and affiliated with the History Department at the University of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The Chair promotes the teaching of, and research into the history and culture of German-speaking immigrants and their descendants in Canada. It interacts with the German-Canadian community in Winnipeg, Manitoba and the rest of Canada through public lectures and the newsletter. The Chair promotes regional, national and international research through conferences, grants and publications.

Editor /Producer: Alexander Freund

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(Unless otherwise stated, all articles were written by Alexander Freund)

Submissions of articles, news, reports, and reviews as well as artwork and photos for publication in this newsletter are welcome.

Lecture Series: Immigrants' Love Story Traced Through Letters

*Katherine Martens: Tina Willms-Nicolai Martens Letters 1920s-1950s
Thursday, 19 September 2002
University of Winnipeg Faculty Club, 7:30 p.m.*

"Were for instance some unauthorized person to read our letters would it not cause a scornful twitching around their mouth?" Nic Martens wondered on 11 July 1926 in one of his early love letters to Tina Willms. Both had come with their families from the Ukraine in the 1920s. They were part of the great exodus of 20,000 Mennonites migrating from the Soviet Union to Canada between 1923 and 1930.

After living with their families in Manitoba, the young couple followed Tina's family to Ontario. Theirs is a fascinating correspondence, especially because, unlike most couples, Nic and Tina continued to write to each other long after they had married.

The correspondence describes their courtship and marriage in 1926, the birth of their daughter in 1929, the ups and downs of adjusting in a new country that was plagued by the Great Depression and involved in the Second World War, and Tina's dramatic struggle with tuberculosis. "Their story of perseverance," says Katherine Martens, "is as unique as it is universal." Together with Brigitte Diop, Martens translated from German the 400-page collection of letters written by members of the Martens and Willms families between 1926 and 1950.

Martens, who is from Winnipeg, is the author of the family memoir *All in A Row: The Klassens of Home-wood* (Winnipeg: Mennonite Literary Society, 1988) and several articles. To support her translation, she received a Research Grant from the Chair in German-Canadian Studies in 1998. Martens hopes to publish the work soon.

