

**Re-thinking Ethnic Boundaries:  
The Negotiation of German-Canadian Ethnic Identities  
in Ottawa, 1945-1975**

by

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Thesis submitted to  
the School of Graduate Studies and Research  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
M.A. degree in History

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Abstract

Re-thinking Ethnic Boundaries:  
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University of Ottawa, 1996

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Professor Mark Stolarik

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Canadian historical memory is often arranged around the central concept of an imagined “Canadian identity”. Recently, Canadians have witnessed public declarations by politicians and academics on the threatening nature of multiculturalism to this historical (un)reality. It may be argued that in various forms the same concerns have existed in Canada since 1763. Despite this long historical tradition, many historians continue to examine the impact of immigrant cultures under the theoretical guise of “assimilation” and measure historical experiences of immigrants by the degree of assimilation a particular group “accomplished.” Such an understanding of immigrants, however, only fosters ethnic stereotypes and hierarchies despite the better intentions of the writers. To this end, these studies do not contribute as much as they could to the larger questions related to immigrants and Canadian identities. The organization of this thesis challenges this methodological approach.

Using “ethnic identity” and “community” as socially constructed elements of historical experience, this thesis looks at how these concepts evolved among German immigrants in post-World War II Ottawa. This study adopts a different approach to immigrant communities by examining three immigrant socio-cultural institutions as sites of negotiation rather than as boundaries between immigrants and the host society. As such, these institutions are treated as areas of public / social space and themselves historical agents, which existed not in isolation from Canadian society but at its centre. This

approach employs sources produced within the community's institutions and by institutions external to the community. Census records and English-language newspapers are used along with institutional financial and membership records, their founding charters, German-language newspapers, and first-person narratives.

The end result is a history which shows "community" and "ethnic identities" as having consistently evolved while engaging social, economic, political, and cultural landscapes which confronted them. Furthermore, the evidence presented in this thesis supports earlier findings which have recognized that German Canadians were hardly monolithic, but also suggests that diversity of German Canadian experiences occurred not only between communities but so, too, within communities. The most significant conclusion of this thesis, however, is that everyday immigrant experiences in the post-1945 era have been central to the larger Canadian historical movement, and not simply the product of "limited identities."

### Acknowledgments

The image of the historian hunched over a poorly lit table, pencil in hand, scanning pages of yellowed paper strewn about in a textbook display of entropy, has been replaced by computer screens, keyboards, and digitized data. Yet the important things, thankfully, have remained largely unaffected by time. At the top of this list is the support and advice of the historian's (in this case "historian-in-training") family, friends, and colleagues. To each of these groups I owe more than a simple thank you.

My family has always been the single most important element of my life and they provide me with love, support, and lots of humour. My mother and sister have both been models for me and to each I am indebted for their unwavering support. My brother has had to serve a one-year sentence as my roommate and it has been twelve months I shall always remember. The laughter, provoking ideas, tennis, and Super Big Gulps, have all had a major role in this project getting finished so quickly. Thanks Michael.

At the University of Ottawa, I have been exposed to terrific historians but even better people. Professor Mark Stolarik not only planted the seeds of this thesis within me as both an undergraduate and graduate student, but as my supervisor he also encouraged me to pursue my interests even when they conflicted a little with his own. This is very empowering for a student. I also owe a special thank you to Professor Chad Gaffield, my classmates in his Social History Seminar, as well as the Research Group (as an honorary "Gaffield Girl"). Much of what this thesis says and how it says them, has been born, challenged, and ultimately made better from these wonderful environments. Of all the great people connected with these, Barbara Lorenzkowski has been especially important as a companion, confidante, and unwavering critic. Her suggestions and distractions made the process an enjoyable one. However, nobody is to blame for the errors within this project as I have managed those all on my own.

Finally, this thesis is partly my family history. I grew up in and with German-Canadian experiences. Constantly I was impressed by the different identities that my family (including grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins) assumed. This thesis has allowed me to look at some of the issues (although in a much different context) connected to that personal experience. As a result, this project has also allowed me the opportunity to think and reflect upon the memories of two wonderful men, my Dad and my Opa. To them both, I dedicate this thesis.

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## Chapter One: Canadian History, Ethnocultural Identities, and the German Canadians of Ottawa: An Introduction

The seventy-fifth anniversary of the Canadian Historical Review in 1995 was marked with a special retrospective on the course of Canadian history, as well as three critical essays on the current state of historical memory and practice. The essays by Joy Parr, Donald Harman Akenson, and Graeme Wynn, collectively speak to the fractious state of “identity” as both a concept and as a topic of study in Canadian history.<sup>1</sup> In three quite different ways, each historian calls for new research which re-constitutes approaches to Canadian identities, by recognizing that the arrangement of populations into neat, static categories such as “woman,” “German Canadian,” or “working-class district,” obscures the critical social processes which created these designations. As Parr says, “...variety needs to be acknowledged as existing historically, not only between people who shared similarities but also within individuals who had been definitively classified in their day... ”<sup>2</sup>

The essays by Parr, Akenson, and Wynn, are representative of a growing awareness of, and respect for, the complex series of relationships involved in the formation of one’s identity.<sup>3</sup> This understanding of identity as an unstable, evolving social construction which is historically and not biologically determined, represents the beginnings of a new

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<sup>1</sup> Joy Parr, “Gender History and Historical Practice,” Canadian Historical Review, 75 (1995), pp.354-373; Donald Harman Akenson, “The Historiography of English-Speaking Canada and the Concept of the Diaspora: A Sceptical Appreciation,” Ibid., pp.377-409; Graeme Wynn, “Maps and Dreams of Nationhood: A (Re)View of the Historical Atlas of Canada,” Ibid., pp.482-510.

<sup>2</sup> Parr, “Gender History and Historical Practice,” p.361.

<sup>3</sup> Chad Gaffield discusses this point in his introduction to the valuable collection of essays in Gaffield, ed., Constructing Modern Canada: Readings in Post-Confederation History (Toronto: Copp Clark Longman, 1994), pp.xviii-xxii. See also his Language, Schooling, Cultural Conflict: The Origins of the French-Language Controversy in Ontario (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1987), esp. chapter seven, “Cultural Fission in Prescott County,” pp.180-189.

relationship between historians, their research, and the past.<sup>4</sup> In this emerging epistemology, historians need to re-examine how they read historical “texts,” re-consider what questions they ask of their data, and challenge themselves to understand better the implications of how they represent their conclusions.<sup>5</sup> This is by no means an easy transition for historians and, not surprisingly, such a re-conceptualization has met with resistance which has often spilled into outright resentment and hostility.<sup>6</sup>

This thesis is a product of the new epistemology, especially with respect to the concept of “ethnic identity” as a historical social construction. Specifically, it is an exploration into the multiple meanings associated with the term “German Canadian” in post-1945 Ottawa and the construction and expression of these meanings through what might be called “public / social spaces of negotiation.”<sup>7</sup> This thesis is also an exploration into some methodologies associated with the new epistemology; the reading of language as constructed and competing “discourses”<sup>8</sup>, the power of representational cultural symbols<sup>9</sup>,

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<sup>4</sup> This description of identity is quite compatible to that suggested by recent theoretical work of cultural theorists such as Stuart Hall. For a salient and succinct discussion of the evolution of theoretical understanding of “identity” see Hall, “The Question of Cultural Identity,” in Stuart Hall, et. al., eds., Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp.597-598.

<sup>5</sup> The best discussion of this in a Canadian context is Parr, “Gender History and Historical Practice.”

<sup>6</sup> The best known “attack” on this new approach is Bryan Palmer, Descent into Discourse (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990). A thoughtful discussion of similar issues raised in Palmer’s polemic is provided in Laura Frader, “Dissent over Discourse. Labor History, Gender, and the Linguistic Turn,” History and Theory, 34 (1995), pp.213-230. A general malaise about the evolution of social history, as well as a fundamental mis-reading of social history, is provided in the oft-cited Creighton Lecture of Michael Bliss reprinted as “Privatizing the Mind: The Sundering of Canadian History, the Sundering of Canada,” Journal of Canadian Studies, 26 (1991-92), pp.5-17.

<sup>7</sup> As will become apparent in the case studies, this study views institutional spaces (such as churches, fraternal benefit organizations, and newspapers) not as boundaries between German Canadians and the larger host society, but rather as spaces in which German-Canadians observed, debated, and made sense of that greater society. As such, these institutions were hosts to a conflation of German-Canadian and non-German-Canadian factors.

<sup>8</sup> “Discourse” refers to written and spoken language which is imbedded with both meanings and resistance. While a particular collection of words may be shared by different groups, the meanings associated with those words may change across time and place.

<sup>9</sup> See the unparalleled discussion of cultural symbols in Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

and the contesting nature of socio-historical memory and traditions.<sup>10</sup> Yet there are still elements of the “old” new social history in this thesis, especially when it provides descriptions of various structures and socio-economic and demographic patterns. In fact, the structure of this thesis symbolizes an intellectual marriage of the old and new epistemologies of social history. Chapter Two is a cursory discussion of migration, community history, settlement, economic roles, and institution building, culminating in what this thesis calls a “structural construction of community.” Chapters Three to Five provide case-studies of three primary socio-cultural institutions of this community. The final chapter discusses the implications of this thesis, not only with respect to its conclusions about German Canadian identities in post-1945 Ottawa, but so too historical inquiries into ethnic identities in Canada’s past.

The case studies of three socio-cultural institutions, one Lutheran church, a fraternal benefit society, and a community newspaper, are the most significant elements of this thesis. In each of these case studies, the institutions are examined as public / social spaces of negotiation in and with which ethnic Germans in postwar Ottawa tried to make sense of their new homes. Rather than seeing these spaces as boundaries which divided “immigrant” from “host society,” this thesis incorporates Charles Taylor’s notion that “the institution is not the point of application of a morality defined elsewhere; rather, it is the primary environment in which morality gets elaborated...(an institution) constitutes an important pole of identification for those who participate in it.”<sup>11</sup> Professor of German literature,

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<sup>10</sup> For the importance of tradition in societies and identities see the essays in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

<sup>11</sup> Charles Taylor, Reconciling the Solitudes: Essays on Canadian Federalism and Nationalism, ed. by Guy Laforest (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993), p.123.

Theodore Ziolkowski, has similarly suggested that “it is in institutions...that individuals come together and reveal group characteristics that transcend the specific.”<sup>12</sup> Thus, the texts supplied by the institutions of these case studies will be read to examine what community-level aspects of “German-Canadian” ethnic identity can be detected and, more significantly, to explore the negotiating processes that were involved in constructing these aspects. However, as each institution, and corresponding public / social space, was different so does each case study reflect that uniqueness. Approaches in each case study vary and so, too, the issues they explore.<sup>13</sup> Yet in this diversity, there is a common commitment to the central theme of constructed ethnic identities through processes of negotiation.

Because of this central theme, the scholarly context of this thesis is somewhat vague. While it is a contribution to the history of immigration, especially the history of German immigration to Canada, the concept of “ethnic identity” has resonance throughout a wide range of historical literature.<sup>14</sup> Yet this thesis does speak directly to one seminal work in Canadian history which covers a wide range of important historical scholarship; Joy

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<sup>12</sup> Theodore Ziolkowski, German Romanticism and Its Institutions (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p.5.

<sup>13</sup> Within each chapter there is a discussion of sources and methodology, as well as definition of pertinent terms.

<sup>14</sup> Recent discussions of the state of immigration history in Canada can be found in Franca Iacovetta, “Manly Militants, Cohesive Communities, and Defiant Domestics: Writing About Immigrants in Canadian Historical Scholarship,” Labour / Le Travail, 36 (1995), pp.217-252; Howard Palmer, “Recent Studies in Canadian Immigration and Ethnic History: the 1970s and the 1980s,” in Valeria Gennaro Lerda, ed., From ‘Melting Pot’ to Multiculturalism: The Evolution of Ethnic Relations in the United States and Canada (Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 1990), pp.25-53. A critical assessment of early writing on Canadian immigration history is provided in Dirk Hoerder, “Ethnic Studies in Canada From the 1880s to 1962: A Historiographical Perspective and Critique,” Canadian Ethnic Studies, 26 (1994), pp.1-18. On German Canadians in particular see Gerhard Bassler, “Germans in Canada: An Introduction to the Historiography,” Immigration History Newsletter, 20 (1988), pp.1-10. The overwhelming bulk of scholarly study devoted to German Canadians has been political history. The only systematic social history is Art Grenke, The German Community in Winnipeg 1872-1919 (New York: AMS Press, 1991).

Parr's The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns 1880-1950 (1990).<sup>15</sup> A discussion of Parr's book, and how this thesis is in many ways a response to it, is certainly warranted.

The Gender of Breadwinners is about a British women's town, Paris, and a German men's town, Hanover, both located in southern Ontario. Parr proposes to study the "relationships among industry, domesticity, and community" in these two industrial towns.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, it is to these much larger issues that Parr's local histories are actually addressed and it is these larger issues that make the book arguably one of the most significant books in Canadian history. Using feminist post-structuralist theory, Parr's study looks at the construction of the very categories by which each town's populations were identified; the "feminine" nature of Paris' textile workers and the "masculine" face of Hanover's furniture makers.

While gender is the primary focus of Parr's study, she places a great deal of emphasis upon the "German-ness" of Hanover.<sup>17</sup> For example, she considers the impact of being denied an opportunity to fight in World War I, because of their "German names," a gendering experience for German boys left behind to "be girls doing women's tasks."<sup>18</sup> However, what was the impact of this denial upon the ethnic identity of these Hanover boys? Did they feel more "foreign" in Canada? How did they react to this intrusion upon their ethnic identity? Would not such influences on ethnic identity intersect with, and certainly influence, gender identity? Parr concludes her discussion of this era of German-

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<sup>15</sup> Parr, The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns 1880-1950 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p.6.

<sup>17</sup> This rather ambiguous and never-defined word even appears in the conclusion. Ibid., p.237.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.136.

Canadian history in Hanover, by saying that the influx of new German immigrants after World War I, allowed the town to retain its “German character.”<sup>19</sup> In so doing, Parr, surprisingly, assumes that German nationality equaled German ethno-cultural identity and that new immigrants brought with them de facto “Germanism.” Yet were not ethnic identities in Germany impacted by the trauma of World War I and the Treaty of Versailles? Were not, therefore, post-World War I German immigrants to Hanover of decidedly different “German” identities as those who had left Germany for Hanover throughout the nineteenth century? Indeed, Parr’s analysis of gender identities in Hanover, while cognizant of the role of ethnicity, leaves a remarkable number of important questions unanswered.

While this thesis does not answer these questions directly, it approaches very similar questions about an era that paralleled that of World War I and the inter-war years. This thesis looks at an equally traumatic era of German-Canadian history, the thirty years after the horrors of Adolf Hitler’s Nazi terror, and by looking at the rich textures of immigrant experiences in this era, suggests that ethnic identities, like gender identities, cannot be reduced to over-simplifications and generalizations. Furthermore, German-Canadian ethnic identities in this thesis are shown to have taken an infinite number of forms in a variety of areas of social life. As well, “German-Canadian” was a term subject to debate within the community, and always in a process of negotiation with the greater “Canadian” society. German-Canadian identities were, as a result, part of an individual’s cultural make-up, along with gender, social class, and age, whether in the private or public spheres of their lives in Ottawa.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, whether going into church, work, the Byward Farmer’s Market, or the

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>20</sup> Feminist scholarship has led the assault on the concept of separate spheres. On this trend see the now-dated, but still relevant, discussion in Linda K. Gerber, “Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman’s

family home, these immigrants did not stop being “women” or “men”, “old” or “young”, “rich” or “poor.” In this thesis, however, it is most emphasized that they did not stop being “German-Canadian.”

While this thesis is interested in the contrasting images and symbols associated with being “German-Canadian” it is not a systematic study of class, gender, or age. Rather, this thesis is most interested in describing the processes involved in the construction of ethnic identity. It will highlight that these processes were hardly monolithic or static over time and place within Ottawa’s German Canadians. Although such factors as rates of inter-marriage, levels of education, or the gendered division of labour, are fascinating and important topics, they are not particularly relevant for this study. Thus, the reader looking for these details will perhaps leave this thesis unfulfilled. However, for those readers interested in the concept of “ethnic identity” or the emerging new epistemology in Canadian history, they will find some aspects of this thesis of, at least, moderate interest.

Before turning to the body of this thesis, a few words need to be said about the concept of “community.” Reference is made throughout this thesis to “German-Canadian communities in Ottawa”, “the community”, “community leaders”, and “debate within the community.” However, “community” is used in this thesis in a very particular way; it applies to a process of social interaction and inter-personal communication which produced an observable public / social space. Such a definition of community is essential for this thesis, as “ethnic identity” was expressed through the processes of community, but not

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Place: The Rhetoric of Women’s History,” *Journal of American History*, 75 (1988), pp.9-39. A more recent review of important feminist literature can be found in Ann-Louise Shapiro, “History and Feminist Theory: or, Talking Back to the Beadle,” in Shapiro, ed., *Feminists Revision History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994), pp.1-23.

defined by these processes.<sup>21</sup> Thus, at no point is it assumed that being a “German-Canadian” in post-1945 Ottawa made one a de facto participant in a German-Canadian community. Still, it is assumed in this study that the processes of German-Canadian community may be interpreted as critical components in the construction and expression of some variant of the term “German-Canadian.”

Before turning to these processes of community and identity, though, the next chapter sketches the structural framework in which “community” and “identity” were formed. While specific to Ottawa and immigrant German Canadians it also provides a snapshot of the larger picture of post-World War II immigration. The collapse of the Nazi regime in 1945 and then the swift re-organization of Europe which followed, triggered an era of human migration unmatched in the modern era. People moved from East to West in Germany and Europe, from “rural” to “urban” in China and other parts of Southeast Asia, and beginning in 1946, the next thirty years witnessed millions of Europeans, Africans, Asians, and South and Central Americans, leave their homelands for new beginnings in what was, once again, the “New World” of Canada and the United States. From this movement, there were literally thousands of new communities and millions of re-organized ethnic, gender, and class identities. This thesis provides a glimpse into one small piece of this much larger picture.

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<sup>21</sup> The difference is perhaps subtle, but equally significant. The inter-connectedness of “identity” and “community” is reflected in Peter Burke, History & Social Theory (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp.56-58. Burke’s systematic study of concepts, historical methods, and epistemologies, discusses both “community” and “identity” together, but emphasizes that the textured relationship between the two.

**Chapter Two: The Structural Construction of a Community:  
Immigration, Settlement, and Economics, 1945 to 1975**

Walking through the British sector of occupied Germany on his way to his family after having been interned in an American prisoner of war camp, Hans Cleve remembers:

I had breakfast with my hosts and attacked the last leg in my journey home vigourously. Late in the afternoon I saw the catholic church in Grauhof and did feel something like relief like unburdened with a load I had to carry. I did not follow the customary way around the garden and over the courtyard but took a shortcut trough the garden passing the fishpond and did come out by the old gardeners residence on the far end of the courtyard. Here I met Karl Marx the smithy in Grauhof who dwelled close by and who told me, where my wife and the kids were housed. It was the bigger classroom of the old school in Grauhof and here I met my family. It was a homecoming, I'll never forget but one thing was missing: The feeling: Yes now you're home. This is your place where You belong. This is your Heimat. This feeling never came up in me and I think partially my children also.<sup>1</sup>

For millions of Germans at the end of the war, the sense of dislocation, displacement, and disillusionment reflected in the passage above was widespread. Families struggled to be reunited. Orphans, widows, and widowers searched for meaning among the ruins of their homes. International organizations estimated that twelve million ethnic Germans were displaced refugees. It is not surprising that so many Germans shared the sentiments of Hans Cleve; their "Heimat"<sup>2</sup> was destroyed by the war and, in some cases, the series of events which followed the Nazi seizure of power in 1933.

For Canadians the end of World War II signaled an end to six long years of separation from loved ones, a time to remember the wasted lives of soldiers and civilians, and an opportunity to move ahead in the process of nation building. Canada had its share of internal problems and social inequity, but it did not feature the physical destruction or the

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<sup>1</sup> Hans Cleve, unpublished memoirs, p.137. This passage is quoted directly and all spelling and grammar left in its original form. These "imperfections" contribute to the emotion and poignancy of the quote.

<sup>2</sup> "Heimat" is a German word for "homeland" except it includes a moral, spiritual connection to the land which goes far beyond the English translation.

massive displacement which plagued Germany. As well, whereas the end of World War II caused Germans to dwell on the recent past, this same era saw Canadians look towards the future. Structural differences between postwar Germany and Canada were equaled, therefore, by important and dramatic differences in collective mentalités.<sup>3</sup> The years 1945 to 1955, especially, would see a fusion of these two separate worlds in one of the greatest eras of human migration in modern history.

In Canada, it was widely accepted that to build a nation required an expanded population. An expanding population, the thinking went, expands domestic labour and consumer markets.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, as Donald Avery's recent study demonstrates, these two markets were central to Canadian federal immigration policy since Confederation.<sup>5</sup> Angelika Sauer, though, has pointed out that from a foreign policy perspective, immigration was also a tool to situate Canada within the re-structuring world order of the emerging Cold War with the Soviet Union.<sup>6</sup> Within this new world order it was not surprising that the recently vanquished enemies of World War II, the Germans, once again became for Canadian immigration officials a desirable source for new Canadian citizens.

First as refugees and then as immigrants, Germans did start to come to Canada after the enemy-alien label was lifted by Order-in-Council PC 4850.<sup>7</sup> They settled in areas of

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<sup>3</sup> Mentalité is used to mean mental habits and categories of thought that are unique to a group of people. For a discussion of the use of this concept see Alfred J. Andrea, "Mentalities in History," Historian, vol.53 (1991), pp.605-608.

<sup>4</sup> This was an argument popular in newspaper editorials on postwar immigration. For examples see the Globe & Mail, 26 February 1946, Ibid., 02 October 1951, Ottawa Citizen, 16 September 1950.

<sup>5</sup> Donald Avery, Reluctant Host: Canada's Response to Immigrant Workers, 1896-1994 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1995).

<sup>6</sup> Angelika Sauer, "A Matter of Domestic Policy? Canadian Immigration Policy and the Admission of the Germans, 1945-50," Canadian Historical Review, vol.74 (1993), pp.226-263.

<sup>7</sup> The language of this order may be found, among other places, in National Archives of Canada (NAC), RG 25, vol.6248, file 9408-a-40, Memo from Escott Reid to UN Ambassador Leger, 20 September 1950.

traditional settlement, like Kitchener-Waterloo and Winnipeg, but most of all they settled in major urban centres. Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa, especially, saw their ethnic German populations rise dramatically. In so doing, the desperate mentalité of Hans Cleve and Germans like him rooted in the events and effects of the Second World War, became entangled in the webs of a Canadian society looking towards the future. This chapter discusses in some detail the demographic and socio-economic structure that these urban immigrants created inside one of Canada's major urban centres. Although the focus here is on Ottawa, recent studies of German-Canadian communities in three other major Canadian cities provide an element of contrast and comparison.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps most significantly, however, the structural overview of Ottawa's German Canadians provided by this chapter becomes critical for the three case studies which follow in subsequent chapters.

To re-capture this history, census records become particularly valuable. These records provide information on demographics, settlement patterns, and socio-economic participation in the local economy of Ottawa. They are useful for broad, systematic overviews but are equally problematic. The category of 'ethnicity' for example evolved between censuses.<sup>9</sup> As well, census takers sometimes had to confront ethnic Germans seeking to subsume their ethnic identity by claiming to be Austrian, Swiss, or in some cases,

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<sup>8</sup> Alfred Pletsch and Inge Vestweber, "The Germans in Montreal - Aspects of Social and Economic Integration," in Frederick Helleiner, ed., Cultural Dimensions of Canada's Geography (Peterborough: Trent University, 1984), pp.39-68; for Toronto see Raymond Breton, et. al., Ethnic Identity and Equality: Varieties of Experience in a Canadian City (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Ruth Gump, "Ethnicity and Assimilation. German Postwar Immigrants in Vancouver, 1945-1970," M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1989. Unfortunately, the only systematic and historical examination of an Ottawa immigrant group is Myron Momryk, "Ukrainians in Ottawa," Polyphony, vol.10 (1988), pp.83-95.

<sup>9</sup> The various definitions of race and ethnicity in the Canadian census can be found in "Appendix A - Instructions and Questions for the Ethnic Origin Data, 1871-1986," in Shiva S. Halli, et. al., eds., Ethnic Demography: Canadian Immigrant, Racial and Cultural Variations (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1990), pp.442-451.

'Canadian' regardless of their accents. The historian who wishes to examine census material after 1901 is confronted with the further problem of not having access to the actual manuscripts of the enumerators. Even with these problems, however, the census is a valuable tool for the patterns it reveals, if less so for exact figures.

Census records are, therefore, the key source of this chapter but are not used alone. Newspaper accounts from the German-language presses, in particular the Ottawa Herald, and Ottawa's two chief English-language dailies, the Citizen and the Journal, augment census materials. Organizational records, such as those of the Alliance of German-Speaking Organizations, contain valuable information on the institutional network which formed in the Ottawa German-Canadian community. As well, John Taylor's insightful study of Ottawa, which remains the most comprehensive discussion of the post-World War II era in the city's history, provides much of the local context.<sup>10</sup> The census, institutional records, newspaper reports, and secondary material, will all be used to capture some of the important structural aspects of this community. First, there will be an examination of the demographic and settlement patterns of postwar German immigration to Ottawa. Secondly, there will be some discussion of the socio-economic roles German immigrants played in Ottawa's local economy. Finally, this chapter will explore the breadth of organizations and institutions which the community established and how this high degree of "institutional completeness" was significant to the community as a whole. Before these three structural aspects are addressed, however, there is a need to discuss the German presence in Ottawa prior to 1945 for it is this history which was to have a significant impact upon the evolution of the post-1945 German experience in the city.

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<sup>10</sup> John Taylor, Ottawa: An Illustrated History (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1986).

### German Canadians in Ottawa Prior to 1945:

According to local memory, the first German immigrants to arrive in Ottawa (then By-town) were two Hessians who had fought for the British in the American Revolution. Theodor von Pincier and Johann Stegmann arrived in the late eighteenth-century but were unable to generate much excitement for other German immigrants, who chose to settle instead in the traditional areas of Upper Canada, especially the Niagara Peninsula, Waterloo County, and the north shore of Lake Ontario.<sup>11</sup> Those Germans who did join Stegmann and von Pincier were not too excited about staying at the junction of the Ottawa and Rideau Rivers. In the early nineteenth century, German settler Louis Besserer is reported to have described Ottawa as a “track of unproductive land 120 miles from anywhere”.<sup>12</sup>

Immigration directly to Ottawa from Germany did not happen to any great degree throughout the nineteenth century. Renfrew County, just to the west of Ottawa, was, however, a significant arriving point for German immigrants. Recruited to colonize the county by government agents, Prussian Germans began arriving in Renfrew County in 1857.<sup>13</sup> Not surprisingly, by 1881 the federal census recorded 4831 ethnic Germans in

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<sup>11</sup> Early German settlement in Canada is best recorded in Heinz Lehmann, trans. by Gerhard Bassler, The German Canadians: Immigration, Settlement & Culture (St. John's: Jespersion Press, 1986), pp.1-92. This very important book by Lehmann was actually written in the 1930s but Bassler's excellent translation, introductory essay, and careful editing make this book a contribution to contemporary historiography.

<sup>12</sup> Der Nordwesten, 14 November 1967.

<sup>13</sup> The Germans of Renfrew have had some scholarly attention. Most notable are Peter Hessel, Destination: Ottawa Valley (Arnprior: Kichesippi Books, 1984) and Brenda Lee-Whiting, Harvest of Stones: The German Settlement in Renfrew County (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985). Lee-Whiting's inability to read German, however, impairs the range of her study while Hessel's study does a thorough reading of both English and German sources.

Renfrew County and just 340 in Ottawa. This discrepancy was to change only marginally over the next sixty years as the table below reflects.

Table 2.1 -- Ethnic German Population in the City of Ottawa and Renfrew County, 1881-1941

<u>Year</u>	<u>Ottawa</u>	<u>Renfrew County</u>
1881	340	4831
1901	1248	9041
1911	1482	9463
1921	2005	9429
1931	2735	9532
1941	3127	9875

Source: Peter Hessel, Destination Ottawa Valley, p.85 and Census of Canada, 1931, 1941.

German immigrants also lived in other areas near and around the city of Ottawa. In Quebec, for example, German settlements arose during the nineteenth-century in several counties near the city of Ottawa.<sup>14</sup> These “Reichsdeutsche” (i.e. Germans from Germany) Quebec settlements and the major settlements in Renfrew County were significant sources for Ottawa’s German community. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth-century, urbanization was occurring all over Canada, as people searched for work in the rising manufacturing areas. This trans-migration, which often is overlooked in trans-national immigration studies, often added a second and third migratory experience for newly arriving immigrants. More often, however, trans-migration occurred within the second or third generation of immigrant families, and this is what occurred among many Renfrew Germans. Indeed, the funeral records at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Ottawa suggest that

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<sup>14</sup> An interesting local, genealogical-based study of a specific group of these Quebec Germans can be found in Alice Biehler Burich, Olden Days: A History of German Settlement in the Township of Mulgrave-Derry, Quebec 1850-1890 (Quyan, Que.: Chesley House Publications, 1990).

Ottawa's modest, but still significant, industrial core attracted Renfrew Germans of the first, second, and third generations.<sup>15</sup>

Despite their small numbers, the pre-World War II Germans of Ottawa established three churches, three German-language schools, a choir, and a 'Deutscher Club'.<sup>16</sup> The churches were established, however, not just to serve the Germans in Ottawa, but so too the Germans living near Ottawa to the north, west, south, and east. In the church records of St. John's Lutheran Church, established in 1895, congregation members featured addresses in Carlsbad Springs, Osgoode, Gatineau, Wakefield, and Aylmer.<sup>17</sup> As well, Alice Biehler Burich found valuable genealogical material on Quebec Germans housed in the records of another Ottawa-based Lutheran church, St. Paul's.<sup>18</sup> The city of Ottawa, therefore, often acted as a hub for rural dwelling Germans whose settlement was in such low concentration that a 'common ground' was needed in order to maintain ethno-religious and ethno-cultural ties. When studying the "Germans of Ottawa", therefore, the researcher needs to be aware that community boundaries extended far beyond the urban / rural dichotomy suggested by simple settlement patterns.<sup>19</sup> In fact, 'ethnic urban Ottawa' featured far more significant pockets of English, Irish, Scottish, French-Canadian, Italian, and Jewish settlers, than it did German. This was a pattern which did not change until World War II.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Archives of Ontario (AO), Reverend D. Rath's Papers, Acc #21210, Mfn #401. In the 1970s, especially, Germans from Renfrew County, western Quebec, and Perth County, all were buried in Ottawa cemeteries.

<sup>16</sup> Der Nordwesten, 14 November 1967.

<sup>17</sup> AO, Rath's Papers, Marriage Register.

<sup>18</sup> Alice Burich, in Olden Days, found valuable information in her community in the church records of St. Paul's Lutheran Church which is located in central Ottawa (King Edward and Wilbrod Streets).

<sup>19</sup> This idea is developed in Chad Gaffield, "The New Regional History: Rethinking the History of the Outaouais," Journal of Canadian Studies, vol.26 (1991), pp.64-81.

<sup>20</sup> Taylor, Ottawa, p.211, Table VI.

The absence of a significant German population in Ottawa prior to the postwar era is reflected in the silence accorded Ottawa's Germans in the city's two main English-language newspapers, the Citizen and the Journal. In the first two weeks after the declaration of war, newspapers in Edmonton, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Kitchener-Waterloo were all very vocal about German spies and saboteurs.<sup>21</sup> Yet the only mention in the Citizen and Journal was in regards to the decision by one of the German churches to maintain German-language sermons.<sup>22</sup> By no coincidence, it was in areas of traditionally high German urban settlement, like Kitchener-Waterloo and Winnipeg, and in areas where German clusters existed in rural areas, such as Saskatchewan, that English newspapers voiced opinions about German Canadians. While Ottawa featured a traditional settlement in the region, this population remained diffused across the entire Ottawa Valley and featured little concentration in the city. As a result, neither the Journal nor the Citizen featured editorials on these local Germans because they were not perceived to be an important story. At the conclusion of the war when newspapers across Canada again reflected on the role of German Canadians as Canadian citizens, the Ottawa papers remained silent while others did not.<sup>23</sup> Not surprisingly, in the immediate postwar era (i.e. 1945-1950) Vancouver, Edmonton, Regina, Winnipeg, Montreal, Toronto, Kitchener-Waterloo, all featured public, formal German relief organizations while Ottawa did not.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Opinions in newspapers were divided, however, as to the threat of fifth columnists in German Canada. See Winnipeg Free Press, 4 September 1939, "No Senseless Intolerance" and Montreal Gazette, 4 September 1939, "Scores of Montreal Nazis Seized in Pre-Dawn Raids by RCMP" for conflicting opinions of the German "threat" in Canada.

<sup>22</sup> Ottawa Citizen, 8 September 1939.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, Globe & Mail, 11 February 1946.

<sup>24</sup> See the list of German relief organizations in NAC, MG 31, H 39 (hereafter von Cardinal Papers), vol. I, file "Correspondence: Embassy and German Canadian Societies".

### German Immigration to Ottawa after 1945:

Even though the city of Ottawa<sup>25</sup> did not feature a highly organized German-Canadian community, it did have approximately 3,000 ethnic German citizens (almost all “Reichsdeutsche”) at the conclusion of World War II and there were other socio-economic factors which attracted German immigrants. Ottawa was the major urban centre which served a historically significant German population throughout the Ottawa Valley and the Outaouais. Perhaps even more significantly, Ottawa was undergoing rapid change in the immediate postwar years. Demographically and spatially, Canada’s capital city was growing at a tremendous rate.<sup>26</sup> This growth was also occurring while a parallel transformation of Ottawa’s economy was taking place. The manufacturing and industrial core, especially the traditional lumber-related industries, were leaving Ottawa or had already left by 1945. Instead, Ottawa was becoming a true ‘government town’. The expanded civil service, involved in a plethora of new government agencies, transformed municipal Ottawa into, largely, a service-oriented and small construction based economy. However, these two pillars of the economy, along with the existing German-Canadian population in and around Ottawa, were to attract a number of German immigrants. Still, the postwar migration of Germans to Ottawa needs to be appreciated as part of a much larger and more significant movement of Germans to urban Ontario and urban Canada.

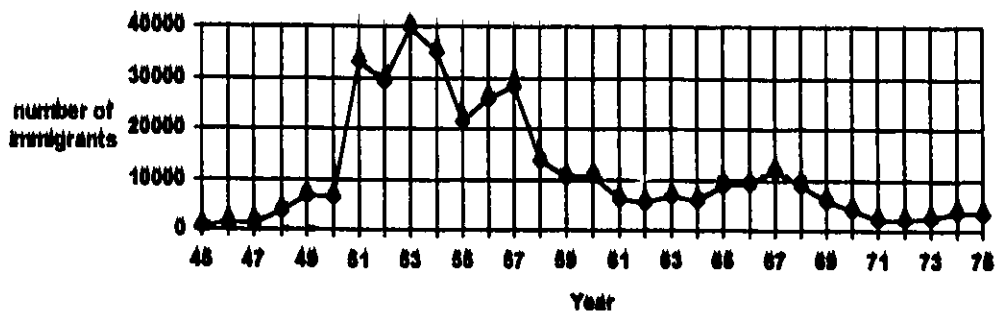
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<sup>25</sup> The ‘city of Ottawa’ has undergone significant shifts in its political boundaries, particularly since World War II. This expression is used with reference to the city core and not the metropolitan area which included cities / towns such as Nepean, Gloucester, and Rockliffe. As the discussion will show, however, these political borders are subsumed by the German-Canadian community’s boundaries.

<sup>26</sup> This paragraph is based on Taylor, Ottawa, pp.171-209, Bruce Elliott, A City Beyond: A history of Nepean, birthplace of Canada’s capital 1792-1990 (Nepean: City of Nepean, 1991), pp.240-275, Caroline Andrew, “Ottawa-Hull,” in Warren Magnuson and Andrew Sancton, City Politics in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), pp.140-165, and Historical Atlas of Canada, Volume III: Addressing the Twentieth Century 1891-1961 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), Plate 57.

Although Germans were not restored to normal immigration requirements until 1950, German migration to Canada began soon after the war's completion. Gerhard Bassler has estimated that of the 150,000 displaced persons who were permitted to come to Canada, one-fifth (30,000) were ethnic Germans.<sup>27</sup> These "Volksdeutsche"<sup>28</sup> were aided in no small part by the coordinated efforts of various ethno-religious, German-Canadian relief agencies, which combined their efforts in the very successful Canadian Christian Council for the Resettlement of Refugees (CCCRR). Yet, as the table below shows, only after 1950 was there a great boom in German migration to Canada.

Graph 2.1 -- Immigration to Canada from West Germany, 1945-1975



Source: F.H. Leacy, ed., Historical Statistics of Canada, 2nd. ed. (Toronto, 1983), Series A-388.

<sup>27</sup> Gerhard Bassler, "German Immigration to Canada 1945-1950: Issues and Questions," Annals, German Canadian Studies (Montreal, 1988), p.172.

<sup>28</sup> "Volksdeutsche" were ethnic Germans from outside Germany, such as Austrians, Swiss Germans, or Baltic Germans. For a comprehensive discussion of these ethnic German see Thomas Sowell, Migrations and Cultures: A World View (New York: Basic Books, 1996), pp.50-104.

The peak era of German immigration to Canada was 1950 to 1957 when over 250,000 Germans arrived.<sup>29</sup> The majority of these immigrants headed to Canada's major urban centres, especially Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, and Ottawa. The demographic impact on each of these cities' local German populations was quite dramatic. In Ottawa, for example, by 1971, 76% of the German immigrant community arrived between 1945 and 1964 and only 4.5% prior to 1945.<sup>30</sup>

Table 2.2 -- German-Canadian Population in the City of Ottawa, 1941-1981.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Germans</u>	<u>Total Population of Ottawa</u>	<u>Number of Germans per 100 citizens of Ottawa</u>
1941	3, 127	215, 022	1.5
1951	3, 938	202, 045	1.9
1961	9, 332	268, 206	3.5
1971	10, 570	302, 430	3.5
1981	15, 560	711, 920	2.2

Source: Census of Canada, 1941-1981. Note: In 1981, the figure for Ottawa represented the entire metropolitan area.

Clearly the 1950s were the peak years for German-Canadian arrivals in Ottawa. The German population in the city went up by 237%, and the proportional growth with respect to Ottawa's overall growing population was equally impressive (184%). The surge in the German demographic presence in Ottawa was to have reverberations in the evolution of the

<sup>29</sup> As immigration records listed "German" for any immigrant arriving from Germany it is virtually impossible to determine what percentage of the 1950-1957 immigrants were "Volksdeutsche" or "Reichsdeutsche" (Germans from Germany).

<sup>30</sup> L.S. Bourne, et. al., Canada's Ethnic Mosaic: Characteristics and Patterns of Ethnic Origin Groups in Urban Areas (Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, 1986), Table 3.1. Ottawa's 'young' German immigrant population contrasted with Saskatoon (35.7% of Germans arrived prior to 1945), Regina (35.7%), Winnipeg (17.8%), Kitchener (11.9%) and Vancouver (11.4%). These figures also indicate which areas received large portions of post-World War II German immigrants (Kitchener, for example) and which did not (Saskatoon, Regina).

postwar German-Canadian community. Primarily, it created a mindset in the newcomers that they were pioneers in Ottawa who had to forge their place in the host Ottawa society from a basically blank slate.<sup>31</sup> This contrasted with the experiences of the German immigrants to Kitchener and Edmonton, for example, who had a large demographic base into which they could be absorbed.<sup>32</sup> Combined with Ottawa's geographic location, early German immigrants in Ottawa experienced much more of a 'frontier feeling' than those Germans arriving in more densely (such as Toronto) and traditionally (Kitchener) populated areas. As will be seen in later case studies, this had important ramifications on the mentalité of active community members who, not co-incidentally, were part of the 1950s wave of German immigration to Canada.

#### German Settlement after 1945:

After arriving in Ottawa, Germans settled in various places.<sup>33</sup> While the majority of German immigrants lived within the city of Ottawa, Germans also appeared in Ottawa's 'suburbs', mainly Nepean, Gloucester, Vanier (known as Eastview), and on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River. Over time, the Germans arriving in Ottawa dispersed the community even further into these suburbs. Yet this pattern does not seem to have been typical of Ottawa's postwar immigrants. It certainly was not paralleled by another important postwar

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<sup>31</sup> This theme appears in several local histories written by Ottawa Germans. See the history of the German-Canadian Male Chorus recorded in its 25th anniversary booklet in National Archives of Canada (NAC), MG 28, V104, vol.4, file "Concordia Ottawa - Anniversary Booklet, 1978".

<sup>32</sup> See Gottlieb Leibbrandt, Little Paradise: The Saga of the German Canadians of Waterloo County, Ontario, 1800-1975 (Kitchener: Allprint Co. Ltd., 1980), pp.273-314 and the oral testimonies in Gisela Forscher, "Growing Up Canadian: Twelve Case Studies of German Immigrant Families in Alberta," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Alberta, 1983.

<sup>33</sup> For a broader perspective of urban immigration settlement see T.R. Balakrishnan, "Changing patterns in ethnic residential segregation in the metropolitan areas of Canada," Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology / Revue canadienne de Sociologie et d'Anthropologie, vol.20 (1982), pp.92-110.

immigrant group, the Italians. Again, the census returns of 1951, 1961, and 1971 provide for an interesting glimpse into the contrasting patterns:

Table 2.3 -- German / Italian Populations of the Greater Ottawa Area, 1951-1971

<u>Area</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1971</u>
Ottawa (city proper)	3938 / 2150	9332 / 8263	10 570 / 12 355
Nepean		977 / 234	3450 / 1455
Gloucester	13 / 5	706 / 110	1645 / 390
Eastview (Vanier)	227 / 44	565 / 177	445 / 200
Rockliffe	47 / 14	59 / 6	75 / 15

Source: Canadian Census, 1951, 1961, 1971. Note: The figure for Nepean was absent in the 1951 census.

The contrast of German and Italian settlement patterns into the host Ottawa society is interesting for several reasons. First, Germans and Italians were the two largest non-British immigrant groups to come to Canada from 1945 until 1960 and both groups were primarily urban-oriented with respect to settlement. Second, both groups shared a similar, overall demographic presence in Ottawa during the postwar era. The differences in settlement attest, in part, to the historically concentrated Italian community in Ottawa, which the Germans did not have. Third, these groups represented two different 'types' of Europeans -- Germans were thought of as mostly-Protestant Saxons and Italians were Catholic Latins. Thus, along with a historical tradition, the retreat of Italians into a nuclear ethnic enclave in Ottawa, along Preston Street between what is now the Queensway and Dow's Lake plus the surrounding neighbourhoods, may be seen as a reflection of the

public's perception of them as racial and ethnic foreigners, while the Germans suffered from ethnic categorization without racial biases.<sup>34</sup>

As the table above also demonstrates, the census allows us to see the degree of difference in settlement patterns between the Germans and Italians of Ottawa. In 1951, 92% of Italians lived in the city of Ottawa as opposed to just 8% in the immediate suburbs. For Germans, the figures were 89% and 11% respectively. Yet after the influx of postwar immigration (for both Germans and Italians) this divide grew. In 1961, 94% of Italians were in Ottawa while the figure for the Germans was 80%. By 1971, Italians stood at 86% while the Germans at just 65%. This low level of German concentration within the urban core of Ottawa was similar to patterns of settlement in Montreal, Vancouver, and Toronto.<sup>35</sup> In none of these cities were there significant levels (i.e. over 8% within a particular neighbourhood) of concentrated German settlement. For the Italians, however, post-World War II 'Little Italies', have been studied in Ottawa, Windsor, and Toronto.<sup>36</sup> In each city, Italian neighbourhoods featuring Italian churches, Italian shops and restaurants,

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<sup>34</sup> The factors which contributed to ethnic neighbourhood formation among ethnic groups who faced open discrimination has been treated most recently by Kay Anderson, Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

<sup>35</sup> The most systematic study of German postwar settlement is Gump, "Ethnicity and Assimilation", which maps the patterns of Vancouver's Germans. For Toronto's postwar German settlement see the map in Breton, et. al., Ethnic Identity and Equality, p.25.

<sup>36</sup> For Ottawa see David Dirks, "Local Community and Ethnic Community: The Italians," commissioned report by the City of Ottawa, 1978. This study expanded upon a sociological survey conducted in Franca Draghi, "The Italians of Ottawa: Final Report," unpublished paper, University of Ottawa, 1974. For the origins and development of Toronto's 'Little Italy' see John Zucchi, Italians in Toronto: Development of a National Identity 1875-1935 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988) and Franca Iacovetta, Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1992). For Windsor see Susan Petkovic, "Italians in Windsor: The Development of the Erie Street Community from Ghetto to Via Italia," M.A. Thesis, Queen's University, 1992. This excellent culture-oriented study examines the shifting perception of Windsor's Little Italy from its ethnic ghetto roots to modern-day tourist attraction

and Italian-language newspapers in variety stores. For the Ottawa Germans, such a neighbourhood did not exist.

Membership lists for the German-Canadian Male Chorus and the German Benevolent Society, as well as the church registers of St. John's Lutheran Church, demonstrate that a German ethnic enclave did not form in Ottawa. Plotting the homes of members in these organizations on a topographical map reveals that even within Ottawa, where the majority of the community lived, Germans were more apt to live next door to French-Canadians, Irish-Canadians, or English-Canadians, than they were their own ethnic brethren. The lack of a geographical concentrated space by this community accentuated further the importance of shared "social space"<sup>37</sup> to the evolution of 'community feeling' among Germans in Ottawa. Scattered settlement also reflected important characteristics within the community.

The differences between war refugees and postwar immigrants were important divisions which existed among the Germans of Ottawa. Primarily, refugees held a different perception of their ethnocultural heritage. Nazi aggressions in Europe had robbed these people of their homes and, for many "Volksdeutsche", their political identity. As a result, those Austrian, Swiss, and Baltic ethnic Germans who did not identify with Germany but rather with their national origins held a deep animosity towards the "German" political label attached to them. Consequently, many refugees did not associate with the German-Canadian institutions and cultural events which the Ottawa German community featured. An editorial in the Ottawa Herald recognized this fissure among Germans in Ottawa:

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<sup>37</sup> Social space refers to the temporary shared space of a group of people around a particular function or event. This idea comes from Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Social Space (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991 [orig. 1974]).

“Obviously many of the immigrants to this country, in particular the earlier ones, were very disillusioned Germans. The chaotic postwar years left them with little or no hope for a better life. So they left home and have always looked back in anger and disappointment. They adopted Canadian customs fast and today often refuse to speak German. They are of course, not interested in anything German.”<sup>38</sup>

This division among the Germans of Ottawa was an important one, for it defined, among German Canadians, who belonged to the community and who did not. Germans who rejected their ethnic German heritage chose to remain outside the activities and institutions of the Ottawa community. For this particular group of Germans, many of whom were probably displaced refugees, geographical spatial dislocation was accompanied by social space dislocation.

In this thesis, this is particularly significant. The case studies in following chapters which explore the evolution of German-Canadian identities use German-Canadian socio-cultural institutions as a window into the community. The question then becomes, of whom do the case studies speak?

In defining “community” in the introductory chapter, it was explicitly stated that ethnicity did not pre-determine community membership. Rather, some element of social interaction with other members of the ethnic group and self-identification had to exist along with the external label of “German”. In Ottawa, the number of Germans who socially interacted clearly did not equate with census returns. Instead, the researcher has to examine the records produced by the community itself to ascertain what proportion of the German ethnic group of Ottawa was an active member of the community. Yet even these are incomplete. What about those Germans who did not belong to any socio-cultural

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<sup>38</sup> “Apathy?”, Ottawa Herald, 01 January 1971.

organization but anonymously attended German socio-cultural events, read the Ottawa Herald and other German-language newspapers, and considered themselves to be part of the community? There is no exact number which can be affixed to the size of the German-Canadian community in Ottawa. However, the census records discussed above do establish the demographic parameters inside which the community was formed. Furthermore, the census returns show that the Ottawa Germans, unlike the Italian immigrant group, was not concentrated in a particular area. These two characteristics provide, as a result, some structure for the case studies which follow, as each had an impact upon the community's growth and evolution. Yet two other characteristics merit some discussion for they, too, were critical to the evolution of ethnic identities, particularly in the case of Ottawa's Germans. These are the economic profile of the community and the organizational network which the community developed.

### **Ottawa's Germans at Work:**

As was stated earlier, Ottawa's postwar economy was one which featured a strengthening service-oriented sector, a weakening manufacturing sector, and a vibrant home and business construction industry. Less apt to come to or remain in Ottawa were those immigrants and refugees who sought work in primary and secondary industry.<sup>39</sup> German immigrants and refugees interested in logging and mining, as well as the secondary

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<sup>39</sup> For an economic profile of postwar German immigrants coming to Canada see Alan Green, Immigration and the Postwar Canadian Economy (Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1976), Table 5-6, pp.152-153.

manufacturing industries, headed for Northern Ontario and Alberta, or Southern Ontario.<sup>40</sup> Yet for Germans interested in the service sector, such as restaurants, bakeries, delicatessens, and barbershops, or building construction, Ottawa was a good match.

For three Germans, Ottawa was a seemingly perfect match. The founders of Bronson Bakery, Hollizner Homes, and Kraft Orthopedic, were German immigrants who arrived with learned skills and who found a niche in the local economy. In turn, each became significant to the local economy and even more so to the German-Canadian community as not only did the three symbolize the potential for immigrant economic success, they also employed many German workers in their businesses.<sup>41</sup> Similar successes among the German Canadians of Ottawa occurred in professional and white-collar occupations such as banking, university teaching, medicine, dentistry, and the law.<sup>42</sup> However, Germans in Ottawa were principally found in small businesses. German caterers, restaurateurs and servers, delicatessen owners, bakers, barbers, tailors, jewelers, and mechanics, could all be found in Ottawa by the early 1960s.<sup>43</sup> However, not all immigrants owned their own businesses. Many worked for German owners as in the case of Bronson Bakery, but far more German immigrants worked in non-German owned businesses. Indeed, the diversity was quite extensive and it involved both men and women. Over time, therefore, Germans in Ottawa were featured in a variety of jobs located in many sectors of the local economy. The table below reflects this trend:

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<sup>40</sup> For an excellent discussion of immigrants in postwar Northern Ontario forestry operations see Ian Radforth, Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario 1900-1980 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), pp.159-168.

<sup>41</sup> Courtney Bond, City on the Ottawa (Ottawa, 1984), pp.234-238.

<sup>42</sup> This group formed the German Canadian Professional & Businessmen Association in 1970.

<sup>43</sup> All these occupations were identified via advertisements in Ottawa Herald (1970-1975), Der Courier (1950-1970), and Der Nordwesten (1950-1970).

Table 2.4 -- German<sup>44</sup> Male / Female Participation in the Ottawa Economy, 1981

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Total labour force</u>	<u>Managerial, Professional, and Technical</u>	<u>Sales, Service, and Clerical</u>	<u>Manufacturing</u>	<u>Construction</u>	<u>Primary Industries and Others</u>
20 -29	265 / 385	95 / 140	90 / 220	30 / 15	25 / 0	25 / 10
30-44	700 / 740	400 / 320	105 / 380	115 / 15	45 / 0	35 / 25
45-54	855 / 495	340 / 160	205 / 260	130 / 45	155 / 10	25 / 20
55-64	<u>360 / 335</u>	<u>145 / 115</u>	<u>60 / 200</u>	<u>75 / 10</u>	<u>45 / 0</u>	<u>35 / 10</u>
Totals	2180 / 1955	980 / 735	460 / 1060	350 / 85	270 / 10	120 / 65

Source: This table is derived from "Ethnocultural Database Materials Series II, Population Data 13: Ottawa - Hull (Ontario Part)", Census Metropolitan Area, 1981., Table 6.1.

Based upon the 1981 Census, this table has both its strengths and weaknesses. Its principal strength is that represents the diverse nature of the German community's economic participation. In so doing, it resembles observations made of postwar Germans in Montreal, Vancouver, and Toronto.<sup>45</sup> The table also shows the gendered nature of the German workforce. Consider that only in row three (45-54 age group) did male German workers outnumber their female counterparts. The participation by both older and younger German women in Ottawa's economy resulted from a few factors. First of all, immigrants from postwar Germany were rarely wealthy travelers, and two or more incomes were often important to the household. Secondly, the service-oriented nature of Ottawa's economy meant that stereotypical 'women's work' (e.g. sales clerks, bank tellers, nurses) was more accessible to immigrant women than perhaps in areas such as Northern Ontario or rural Alberta, whose primary industry-based economies kept women out of the labour force for a longer time. Finally, the struggling Canadian economy of the 1970s accelerated for many

<sup>44</sup> "German" was defined as mother tongue.

<sup>45</sup> See, especially, the discussion in Gump, "Ethnicity and Assimilation.", pp.77-95.

families the movement of women from unpaid labour in the home to paid labour in the public workforce. Thus, the 1981 census may have featured working German women who had only entered or re-entered the workforce since the early 1970s. While not permitting a sophisticated and detailed discussion of German women, this table at least provides an important reminder of their roles as breadwinners.

One of the principal shortcomings of this table is that equates mother tongue with ethnicity. Therefore, non-German nationals (the "Volksdeutsche") who spoke German were counted along with German nationals. This does skew the exact numbers somewhat. However, the reliance on mother tongue also allows the researcher to determine the differences between German immigrants and German ethnics born in Canada. As language retention among postwar Germans was quite low, especially between generations, it is safe to assume the overwhelming majority of those in Ottawa who reported German as their mother tongue in 1981 were immigrants.<sup>46</sup>

Thus, it may be concluded that the trend of German immigrant labour was to find work in many sectors of the economy and to use their European skills to their advantage in Canada. Indeed, German men and women in Ottawa actually maintained a participation rate in the white-collar and skilled sectors which was above the municipal average and far above the Italian ethnic average.<sup>47</sup> Is it possible to conclude that Germans were an economic success in postwar Ottawa? Perhaps, but with some important caveats.

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<sup>46</sup> Leo Dredge and Peter Henstenberg, "Non-official Multilingualism: Factors Affecting German Language Competence, Use and Maintenance in Canada," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, vol.18 (1986), pp.90-109.

<sup>47</sup> See "Ethnocultural Database Materials Series II, Population Data 13: Ottawa - Hull (Ontario Part)", Tables 3.1 and 3.7.

Possessing skills did not necessarily equate, initially, with work for arriving German immigrants. Too often, historical analysis which looks at German immigrants accepts prima facie that their learned trades found work in Canada simply because there was a demand. Ruth Gump's analysis of postwar Germans in Vancouver echoes that of researchers looking at Toronto and Montreal Germans: "German postwar immigrants generally adjusted easily and speedily to the Canadian economic and social structure and encountered little rejection from their hosts...".<sup>48</sup> The records of the German Benevolent Society of Ottawa, discussed in detail in a later case study, reveal that the transition of German skilled labour, for example, was often impeded by certification problems. Unless (and until) the skilled German immigrant spoke excellent English or French, receiving a Canadian license to practice his / her trade was next to impossible. Franca Iacovetta found the same situation among the postwar Italian skilled workers arriving in Toronto.<sup>49</sup> Thus, while the table above reflects the appearance of Germans in a variety of economic sectors, and concentrated heavily in white-collar and skilled positions, this should not obscure the struggles many of these people had to overcome in order to reach that goal.

Struggle and success were important to the construction of German-Canadian identities in Ottawa. The economic diversity, while beneficial to the material survival of individuals and families, also helped produce some of the divisions within the community. The workplace can be a significant place for social interaction and communication. Historians such as Franca Iacovetta have shown that for immigrants, especially, the workplace played a historically important role in extending the boundaries of the community

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<sup>48</sup> Gump, "Ethnicity and Assimilation.", p.162.

<sup>49</sup> Iacovetta, Such Hardworking People., p.130.

and breeding more cohesiveness within that extended community.<sup>50</sup> Among Ottawa's Germans, the lack of a highly concentrated workforce symbolized the economic success of the individual immigrant but also contributed to struggles within the community for unity.

### **The Socio-Cultural Organizational Network:**

For the German-Canadian community of Ottawa, socio-cultural organizations were critical to overcoming the diffusion encouraged by settlement and economic proliferation. Beginning with the churches, especially St. John's Lutheran Church which had been established in 1895, the post-World War II German Canadians of Ottawa forged a network of institutions to foster the growth and evolution of the community.<sup>51</sup> In 1946, the Deutsche Club was the first formal organization to be established, and its mandate was to encourage the use of the German language and promote German culture to not only German ethnics but anyone with an interest in the language.<sup>52</sup> The founding of the German Catholic Church, St. Albertus, in 1951 gave the Ottawa Germans a second important base (along with the Lutheran church St. John's) from which to develop the organizational network.<sup>53</sup> The influx of immigration during the 1950s resulted in the proliferation of several other prominent organizations; the German-Canadian Male Chorus, the German Benevolent Society, Maple Leaf Almrausch Club, the First Mardi Gras Society, the Austrian Society, the Swiss Valley Club of Ottawa, and the Teutonia Club. As well as these

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., pp.154-196.

<sup>51</sup> This organization contrasted with the experiences of Vancouver's Germans. There, the Neueinwanderer ("new immigrants") were highly reluctant to join German clubs and organizations much less organize new ones. See Ulrike Radermacher, "Containerdeutsche - Contemporary German Immigration to Australia and Canada," PhD Thesis, (University of British Columbia, 1991), p.135.

<sup>52</sup> Ottawa Herald, 01 April 1972.

<sup>53</sup> Dieter Kiesevalter, Kanada - gelobtes Land? Aus dem Leben einer deutschen Auslandsgemeinde (Ottawa, 1994), p.213.

organizations, the two prominent national German-language newspapers, Der Courier and Der Nordwesten, began a special "Ottawa" section of every edition to go along with the Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Montreal sections. This section of the newspapers acted as a means of communication to those Germans in Ottawa who considered themselves part of the community but who did not participate in the other institutions. The same role could have been filled by the German-Language Book Store which opened its doors on Sparks Street in the late 1950s, and provided for community members an opportunity to remain connected to political, literary and cultural movements in Germany.<sup>54</sup>

During the 1960s, annual fests and celebrations gave the community a very public platform and defined for many in Ottawa the 'meaning' of German-Canadian. The Karneval and the Oktoberfest celebrations were public events which attracted thousands of people every year. City leaders, including the mayor, were part of a larger crowd which saw these German festivals as 'foreign' celebrations.<sup>55</sup> The happy-go-lucky atmosphere at the Karneval and Oktoberfest, along with the performances of the German-Canadian Male Chorus, were also the most public displays of unified German-Canadianism. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Ottawa Journal would title a feature piece of the community in 1965 as "The Germans -- They do it in Song and Dance".<sup>56</sup> However, as the case studies

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<sup>54</sup> The bookstore advertised itself as "Canada's only German-language bookstore" in Der Courier during the early 1950s. Ruth Gumpff noted the importance of the German book store in Vancouver's German-Canadian community in her study. "Ethnicity and Assimilation.", p.94.

<sup>55</sup> This message is conveyed in Kenneth Fogarty's letter to the community in Ottawa Herald, 01 December 1970.

<sup>56</sup> Ottawa Journal, 23 March 1965. With this article were two choreographed pictures of German men and women dressed in 'traditional' (i.e. Bavarian) outfits supposedly practicing 'German' songs and dances. There was also a unchoreographed photograph of the German-Canadian Male Chorus dressed in everyday collared shirts, slacks, and bow-ties, rehearsing. While the first two photographs symbolized the external perspective of the Germans as distinctly foreign-looking and foreign-behaving, the picture of the Chorus represented how most in the German-Canadian community saw themselves.

will show this public perception of the Germans rarely matched reality and the historical experiences of Germans in Ottawa were defined by issues and problems that went far beyond song and dance.

By the end of the 1960s, the German-Canadian network in Ottawa featured an array of organizations which were openly apolitical and nonsecular. For these organizations song and dance were at the cornerstone of their *raison d'être*. However, behind the public pronouncements of gemuetlichkeit, there lay very serious and deep concerns. German community leaders for example, were very concerned about the future of their organizations as many community members and their children, especially, drifted away from community events.<sup>57</sup> As well, some in the community felt that there remained in the public a resentment of Germans because of World War II. The continued presence of Nazi stereotypes in film and television were particularly painful for some in the community.<sup>58</sup> A third concern dealt with the political strength of the community. Even though the community had a large demographic presence in Ottawa, only the German Benevolent Society seemed to make inroads with local political leaders. All of these reasons combined to generate enough sentiment among the various individual institutions to create the 'Alliance of German-Speaking Organizations of Ottawa' in 1970 and a local German-language newspaper, the Ottawa Herold.

The Alliance and the newspaper were attempts to solidify the German-Canadian community in Ottawa and to establish strategies to extend the community's influence with the second and third generations. While these two bodies will be discussed in the final case

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<sup>57</sup> Ottawa Herold, 01 January 1971.

<sup>58</sup> See Chapter 2 of this thesis.

study in more detail, their establishment held important structural implications. These two elements seemed to have been the final elements required to establish a high degree of “institutional completeness”.<sup>59</sup> Yet institutional completeness did not define the German-Canadian community of Ottawa. Instead, institutional completeness provided structural support for the processes of the community to function. Primarily, these institutions bred a higher degree of communication than would otherwise have existed. German Canadians of Ottawa used their institutions throughout the 1950s and 1960s for various functions which were dutifully supported by fellow organizations. With time, this continued interconnectedness created a cache of people in the German-Canadian community who shared similar concerns and problems. As a result, inter-personal communication promoted by institutional events eventually bred inter-organizational communication. The founding of the Alliance and Ottawa Herald may be seen, therefore, as a product of the ‘coming together’ phase of the 1960s.

With such an organizational network, the diffusion of the German-Canadian population of Ottawa with respect to settlement and economic roles, was in part overcome. Yet such an arrangement certainly caused the unity of the German-Canadian community to be tenuous. Those who could either not afford the free time to participate in organizations or chose not to involve themselves, were perceived as “passive” members of the community by those who were actively involved.<sup>60</sup> As well, socio-cultural institutions were not as

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<sup>59</sup> This term was first defined in Raymond Breton, “Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and Personal Relations to Immigrants,” *American Journal of Sociology*, vol.70 (1964), pp.193-205. It refers to a high concentration of institutional support, such as churches, fraternals, schools, restaurants, ethnic shops, doctors and other professionals, as well as a local ethnic newspaper.

<sup>60</sup> Membership lists in the German-Canadian Male Chorus, the Benevolent Society, and the Alliance, were divided into two categories, “passive” and “active”. This binary division by community leaders can also be gleaned from minutes of meetings held by the Alliance in NAC, MG 28, V98, file “Ottawa Herald”.

prevalent in daily lives as the family, the host society, or the workplace. In all three of those areas, German Canadians in Ottawa were fragmented. Furthermore, as a community requires social interaction and therefore shared social space, the dispersal of Germans throughout the greater Ottawa area gave community leaders genuine reason to fear for the sundering of 'Germanism' in the community.

However, as discussion in the following chapters will show, socio-cultural institutions and the organizational network of the Ottawa German community were critical to the negotiation of ethnic identities. For example, the German immigrant father who woke in the morning, read the local Ottawa paper or listened to local radio over breakfast, worked for the City of Ottawa during the day, returned home for dinner with his family and heard about school, dances, hockey practice, and boyfriends, and then went to sing in the German-Canadian Male Chorus, had his ethnic identity strengthened by forces from both sides of his hyphenated existence. Without the choir, the negotiation of this person's ethnic identity would have been primarily in opposition to 'foreign' elements in the host society. By attending the choir, going to a German sermon, playing in the Maple Leaf Almrausch soccer league, supporting the German Benevolent Society, or even reading the Ottawa Herald, German immigrants had their ethnic identities influenced not just by foreign opposition forces in the host society but so, too, familiar sounds and ideas from fellow German ethnics. This structural framework is crucial, therefore, to understanding the integration of postwar German immigrants into Canadian society.

From this structural overview, it is now possible to turn attention to specific case studies within Ottawa's German-Canadian community. The history of the community in Ottawa prior to 1945 was one which did not leave much of an institutional legacy within the city, but one which connected the urban Ottawa Germans to Germans all over the Ottawa Valley. The massive demographic impact in Ottawa brought on by postwar immigration in the 1950s highlighted the lack of institutional development in the German-Canadian community. Furthermore, the absence of a historically significant community also reflected in the diffused settlement patterns as arriving newcomers from Germany did not have a German ethnic enclave in which to ease adjustment. From very humble origins, therefore, a new German community in Ottawa developed after World War II which used socio-cultural organizations to extend community boundaries and to negotiate coping strategies within their new homeland. Yet this structural development did not define the ethnic identity of these people. Rather, structural development of the Ottawa German-Canadian community provided the material framework in which community members dealt with their new surroundings and, more importantly, how these newcomers integrated within the larger Canadian society. The case studies which follow will hopefully illuminate some of the historical experiences and outcomes that occurred during this process.

**Chapter Three: The Production and Evolution of a German Public / Social Space:  
St. John's Lutheran Church, 1945 to 1965**

For the first ten years after World War II, German immigrants and refugees arriving in Ottawa had very little institutional support. A new arrival at the train station or bus station might be helped by one of the church-sponsored relief agencies, such as Lutheran World Relief, but more often those arriving would wander into stations and find city representatives (maybe), relatives (occasionally), and brochures (most likely). These brochures were printed in English, French, and some other European languages including German, Italian, and Dutch. Inside the brochures, immigrants would see messages like the following from a 1962 item titled, appropriately, "Welcome to Ottawa!":

"Church and community organizations are an important part of life in Canada. (They are the centre of many activities and much of the social life of this city revolves around them.) Many churches have special arrangements for welcoming and helping immigrants."<sup>1</sup>

From 1945 to 1955 and throughout the whole postwar era of German immigration, the churches of the Ottawa German-Canadian community played a pivotal role in providing the immigrants with some of their first impressions of Ottawa. Yet this primary role of the church was only one of many that this particular socio-cultural institution fulfilled.

The 'Church', in all its religious, social, and cultural manifestations, is an important element to any historical study of an immigrant community. Within churches, immigrants not only found spiritual nourishment, but often heard their mother-tongue, saw familiar or comforting faces, and intermingled with community brethren. Robert Harney has said that historians should pay close attention to immigrant churches for "whether seen as friend or

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<sup>1</sup> A copy of this brochure may be found in National Archives of Canada (NAC), MG 31, H39, vol.2 (von Cardinal Papers), file "German Benevolent Society: Tenth Anniversary".

enemy, the church...was a part of the immigrant's map and a gathering place."<sup>2</sup> It is this less spiritual nature of the church which is of most concern here. This chapter focuses on some of the experiences and patterns of ethnic identity produced by Protestants in the Ottawa German-Canadian community at St. John's Lutheran Church.

This chapter examines two important roles that the church played within the community. First, there is a discussion of the church providing a social meeting point for unmarried community members. For new arrivals dislocated from their homes, the church as a meeting place was critical to their emotional and psychological well-being. Yet, the need for such a meeting place was symbolic of a much broader situation in postwar Ottawa; Germans, especially new German immigrants, were foreigners, removed from the Ottawa host community despite being white, Protestant, and Northern Europeans. Such a feeling of otherness had resonance within the processes of community members forging their cultural identities.

Secondly, this chapter examines how the church can be used to explore the negotiation of identities within some family coping strategies.<sup>3</sup> Specifically, baptism records are used to chart the pattern of names given newborn children. Of most interest here is the rate at which "German"<sup>4</sup> names were given by "German" parents<sup>5</sup> to their offspring. While a seemingly innocent practice by parents, the allocation of names to newborns contributed, it will be shown, to the construction of that person's and the

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Harney, "Ethnicity and Neighbourhoods," in Harney, ed., Gathering Place: Peoples and Neighbourhoods of Toronto, 1834-1945 (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1985), p.13.

<sup>3</sup> Historians focusing upon the family are aware of the many interpretations "family strategies" has as an analytical concept. This paper uses family strategy as a short-term and long-term tactic that affects one or more members of a family regardless of how that decision was made or by whom. In this study of baptisms it is assumed that both father and mother had an influence in the decision-making process and therefore the expression "parents" is used to label those responsible for naming the children. For a useful debate of the concept see Leslie Page Moch, et al, "Family Strategy: A Dialogue," Historical Methods vol.20 (1987), pp.113-125.

<sup>4</sup> "German" names are those names which are still in their ethnic-German form and have not been Anglicized. Therefore "Miller" would not be considered German despite its connections in many families to the German "Mueller".

<sup>5</sup> "German" parents were those couples where at least one parent had an ethnic-German surname.

community's ethnic cultural identities. Significantly, in both the discussion of naming patterns and the role of the church as a social meeting place, there is less emphasis upon the spiritual and religious nature normally associated with immigrant churches.

Is such an approach viable considering the historical importance of religion to immigrants, both on an individual and group basis? If this chapter focused upon the importance of distinct ritual Protestant and Catholic symbols, then certainly an examination downplaying the importance of religion would be incomplete. Yet, this chapter is using the church and its surviving records to examine the community's identities, not as "Protestant" or "Catholic", but instead by considering the church as a German-Canadian "public / social space".<sup>6</sup> There is some historical justification for such an approach. Many of the socio-cultural institutions of the Ottawa German-Canadian community used Ebinger Hall at St. John's to hold meetings and social functions.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, these institutions, such as the German Benevolent Society and the Concordia Male Chorus, were deliberately apolitical and non-secular.<sup>8</sup> As for church-related ceremonies, while religious rituals such as baptisms, marriages, or confirmations, were important to families, as cultural symbols they were much more significant as public expressions of identity.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, this chapter accepts that the very public activities of marriage, confirmation, and baptism can be seen as an expression of cultural identity and

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<sup>6</sup> "Public space" refers to an area which featured social interaction as a primary function. Notions of "space" as an analytical concept have been subject to much debate. For the importance of space to the production of identity see the differing views of Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991 orig. 1973) and Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), esp. pp.115-173.

<sup>7</sup> The German Benevolent Society, the German Language Club, the Concordia Male Chorus, the Mardi Gras Society, and the Teutonia Club all held meetings at St. John's over the period 1955-1970.

<sup>8</sup> The constitutions of both organizations explicitly state their apolitical and non-secular mandates. See a copy of the Benevolent Society's constitution in the von Cardinal Papers, vol.1, file "German Benevolent Society: by-laws, outline of objectives" and for the Concordia Male Chorus see NAC, MG 28, V104, vol.2, file "Concordia, Ottawa. Constitution, n.d., 1965, 1972).

<sup>9</sup> This idea is used in Suzanne Morton, "The June Bride as the Working-Class Bride: Getting Married in a Halifax Working-Class Neighbourhood in the 1920s," in Bettina Bradbury, ed., *Canadian Family History: Selected Readings* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1992), especially pp.360-361.

less of a religious ceremony.<sup>10</sup> In considering the church as a public / social space, this approach seems to satisfy Terrence Murphy's suggestion that immigration historians need to ask "how religious institutions provided an organizational framework in which group formation could occur".<sup>11</sup>

In order to proceed along these lines sources need to be read and managed with a focus upon the context and the content of the church. This chapter will use the parish register of St. John's, church histories, and newspaper reports to quantify and qualify the experience of the Ottawa German-Canadian community inside and out the social space of this particular institution.<sup>12</sup> The church histories and newspaper reports sketch the general framework in which the church functioned and provide insight into the importance of the church as a social meeting place. These sources are used in two specific ways. First, they provide details and data which answer questions such as what the church did, who attended, and how important the church was to the community. Second, these sources provide implicit clues as to the role of the church. For example, the pamphlet (discussed below) which was given to the new arriving immigrants is significant not just for what it says about meetings and dates and places, but also for how it portrays its messages.

The baptism and marriage records of St. John's are the most significant source in this chapter. This evidence is particularly valuable because it allows for a broader and more systematic study of the community than that offered by literary sources. Historians are well aware of the potential for so-called 'routinely-generated' sources, such as baptism records, to be read as cultural markers. Donald Akenson<sup>13</sup>, Chad Gaffield<sup>14</sup>, and Bettina

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<sup>10</sup> This idea is developed more fully in Peter Jackson, Maps of Meaning (New York: Routledge, 1989), pp.76-78.

<sup>11</sup> Terrence Murphy, "Religion and ethnicity in Canadian historiography," Studi Emigrazione, no.103 (1991), p.305.

<sup>12</sup> The register is part of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario Collection. Archives of Ontario (AO), Reverend D. Rath's Papers, Acc.#21210, Mu. #9494, MFN #401.

<sup>13</sup> Donald Akenson, The Irish in Ontario (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984).

<sup>14</sup> Chad Gaffield, Language, Schooling, and Cultural Conflict: The Origins of the French-Language Controversy in Ontario (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).

Bradbury<sup>15</sup>, are just three historians who have used these type of sources, in combination with traditional sources, to expand our understanding of the past. Gaffield especially has used these sources to probe into the heart of the cultural identity of Franco-Ontarioans, thereby re-orienting our historical understanding of French identity in Canada.<sup>16</sup> Yet Gaffield did this despite conventional wisdom which would say, not incorrectly, that culture is a highly unquantified condition.

Routinely-generated sources are valuable for a study of cultural identity because they provide "witnesses in spite of themselves", as the French medievalist March Bloch said fifty years ago.<sup>17</sup> Ethnic, cultural, class, and gender identities, cannot just be read in the conscious recollections of an individual or from symbols deliberately created. Historical actors need to be interpreted also for behaviour that may be labeled "normal", "average", or even "mundane". Indeed, for some, a study of baptisms would seem just that. Yet, when these "normal", "average", "mundane" activities are placed into historical context and analyzed from an informed perspective, they can be interpreted as manifestations of much larger political and socio-economic forces. Thus, it is perhaps best to begin this study with some discussion of this historical context.

St. John's was the paternal member of the post-1945 German-Canadian network in Ottawa, having celebrated its fiftieth anniversary the same year at the same time the Nazi regime fell in Europe. In 1949, St. John's started a weekly meeting for new (and old) German speakers in Ottawa. Dietrich Kiesewalter recalls that it was Pastor Leo Ebinger who, "began in 1949, on the last Sunday evening of each month, a 'Deutscher Abend'. This 'Deutscher Abend' or 'German Evening', was later known as the beginning of the

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<sup>15</sup> Bettina Bradbury, Working Families: Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1993).

<sup>16</sup> In a review essay on Language, Schooling, and Culture Conflict, Harvey Graff elaborates on the significance of Gaffield's approach with respect to eliminating the barriers between the private and public spheres. See Graff, "Families and Politics: Beyond Public / Private Dichotomies and Empty Theories," Journal of Family History, vol.13 (1988), pp.433-439.

<sup>17</sup> This oft quoted phrase of Bloch is representative of his foresight and lasting influence on so much of modern social history.

"German Society".<sup>18</sup> One of the reasons behind the success of this Deutscher Abend, was the fact that the church was the first destination for many newcomers to Ottawa and became an important point of reference for new immigrants. As well, the popularity of this evening was aided by a brochure which greeted new German arrivals to Canada.<sup>19</sup>

In the one-page brochure published by the church and addressed "Dear Immigrant," there is featured a hand-drawn picture of a strong, smiling, handsome man on the right side of the page, projecting an image of gemuetlichkeit. Such an image was inviting to the newcomer, especially those who were very tentative and quite unsure about the future. Alongside the sketch, there were words, in German, of welcome to Canada and the promise of fraternity in this church. While a mixture of religious recruitment and non-secular encouragement, this document suggests that newcomers to Ottawa were not shunned or ignored by the smaller, older German-Canadian community. Perhaps the only visible link between the "old" and "new" generations of German immigrants, this document and the memories associated with it<sup>20</sup>, suggest the church served as a conduit through which important inter-generational participation occurred.

Still, for new German arrivals to Ottawa, such important symbolic connections were far from their minds. This advertisement found a receptive audience because the prospect of seeing more of these strong, German (stereo)types, and the opportunity of speaking German, were shelter from the foreignness of Canadian society. In 1949, St. John's was a refuge from the greater Canadian society and not, as was later the case, a place of interaction with the greater society. Thus, the appeal to immigrants was not to use the church as an entrépôt into the mainstream of Ottawa's society, but to use the

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<sup>18</sup> Dieter Kiese-walter, Kanada-gelobtes Land? Aus dem Leben einer deutschen Auslandsgemeinde (Ottawa, 1994), p.15. This book is a treasure of documents and sources for the historian of Ottawa and specifically Ottawa's postwar German-Canadian community. Kiese-walter was not only a community leader (including being a onetime editor of the Ottawa Herold) but his book has assembled reminiscences and copies of documents which he collected from the community.

<sup>19</sup> A copy of this document can be found in Ibid., p.15.

<sup>20</sup> See Ibid., pp.13-18.

church as an escape from it. Indeed, the sense of "otherness" felt by the German immigrants was appreciated and understood by the church.

The church's own history may have had much to do with its empathy for the new foreigners.<sup>21</sup> The church was founded in 1895 by dissatisfied members from the original Lutheran parish of Ottawa, St. Paul's. St. Paul's had been founded in 1874 by Prussian immigrants who, probably, drifted to Ottawa from the older German settlement in Renfrew County. St. Paul's was part of the Missouri Synod, the largest and most significant synod of the German Lutheran churches in North America. Yet in search for a new style of worship, one that placed a different emphasis upon the progressive nature of religion, approximately fifty members of St. Paul's left from the congregation to form St. John's. The new church became a part of the American Lutheran Church, a more liberal Synod. This move was not unusual among nineteenth-century German Canadians. As was mentioned earlier, divisions were rampant among 'mainstream' German Canadians, even within a common religion. After 1895, St. John's continued to grow as a parish and after World War I, when nativist measures by the government and an aroused public prohibited the use of German-language in the public sphere<sup>22</sup>, only St. John's, and not St. Paul's, returned to German-language sermons.

In the years 1919 to 1945, therefore, St. John's was the principal centre of the German-Canadian community, principally because it was the only formal, social space where the German language could still be heard in public. In September of 1939, the Ottawa Evening Citizen reported that St. John's was continuing German services on

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<sup>21</sup> The history of Lutheranism in the Ottawa Valley has been the focus of some study, particularly by church elders. See Barton Beglo and Jo Nordley Beglo, eds., By Faith: Lutherans in Ottawa and the Valleys (Ottawa: St. Peter's Press, 1995). This paragraph uses Burton Beglo, "Lutherans in Ottawa", especially pp.51-56. See also the church histories produced at St. John's in 1945 and 1970 for the fiftieth and seventy-fifth anniversaries held in AO, Rath Papers.

<sup>22</sup> The best study of World War I nativism towards German Canadians is Art Grenke, "The German Community of Winnipeg and the English-Canadian response to World War I," Canadian Ethnic Studies, vol.20 (1988), pp.21-44.

Sunday mornings because the old parishioners had great trouble with English.<sup>23</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that St. John's became the first important locale in Ottawa for refugees and immigrants after World War II. It was the only institution which did not abandon its German heritage.

A great deal of credit for this maintenance of "Germanness" was due to the efforts of the pastor, Leo Ebinger, who had come to St. John's in 1916.<sup>24</sup> Ebinger was an American-born, German-trained, minister whose formative education in Germany came during the pan-Germanist idealism of the Wilhelmine Empire.<sup>25</sup> Ebinger, while a German-American by birth, came to a parish with a strong German tradition and from the romantic image depicted in the church's history, appears to have been the most significant influence in the history of the church. Ebinger's willingness to continue German-language sermons during World War II and his encouragement of German-language activities after the war -- including "Kindergottesdienst und Sonntags-Schule"<sup>26</sup> -- was significant to the evolution of a German-Canadian identity. These activities provided a sense of continuity after the sense of dislocation following the collapse of the Third Reich in 1945. However, the importance of St. John's as a symbol of the community most certainly waned after 1965 when fifty German members, concerned about the decreasing amount of German-language use, left the church to form yet another congregation, Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church.<sup>27</sup> Still, from 1945 to 1965, St. John's provided a critical cultural base upon which the very "new" community grew.

An element of this cultural base was the 'Deutscher Abend' and along with it, the opportunity for single men and women to mingle. The degree to which German

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<sup>23</sup> "Germans in Ottawa", Ottawa Evening Citizen, 8 September 1939.

<sup>24</sup> Ebinger's legacy is recorded in the church histories as well as the testimonial accorded him in Kiewalter, Kanada-gelobes Land?, p. 16. Ebinger's importance to the church is evident by the naming of Ebinger Hall to the addition added to St. John's in the early 1950s.

<sup>25</sup> For a detailed and fascinating discussion of this era see Woodruff Smith, The Ideological Origins of Nazi Imperialism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), especially pp. 21-51.

<sup>26</sup> AO, Rath Papers, Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Booklet.

<sup>27</sup> Beglo, "Lutherans in Ottawa", p. 56.

immigrants could find love and companionship outside their ethno-cultural group was quite low. As a result, institutional meeting points like the Deutscher Abend were critical to the personal relationships of the Ottawa German-Canadian community. One community member recalled that in the 1950s “these institutions became reception camps for new immigrants who were looking for contacts; the social gatherings were known as ideal hunting grounds for singles.”<sup>28</sup> These hunting grounds were apparently quite fertile.

Marriage records from St. John’s, for example, demonstrate two interesting patterns.<sup>29</sup> First, the number of marriages involving Germans at St. John’s rocketed in the 1950s.<sup>30</sup> Secondly, the rate of inter-ethnic marriages between Germans and non-Germans in the first ten years after World War II (1945-1955) hardly varied.<sup>31</sup> The impact of immigration was undoubtedly a major factor in this regard. However, not only did institutions bring together marriage partners but they supplied a comforting social space within which to conduct the rituals of courtship.<sup>32</sup>

This was a critical function for the community. As “others” in Ottawa, single ethnic German men and women required a place to meet. Return migration to Germany, which has never been counted by government officials, not only had connections to the economic success of an immigrant but so, too, his or her ability to find love and companionship. Thus, the role of institutions and events like the ‘Deutscher Abend’ need to be understood as fundamental to the adjustment process of an immigrant along with other economic and political forces.

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<sup>28</sup> “Editorial”, *Ottawa Herald*, 1 September 1973.

<sup>29</sup> AO, Rath Papers, Parish Register – Marriage Records. All subsequent calculations related to marriage are derived from this source.

<sup>30</sup> From 1945 to 1950 there were 9 “German” marriages (of 48 total marriages at St. John’s) and from 1951 to 1955 that number jumped to 42 (of 80). “German” marriages means both the wife and husband were ethnic Germans.

<sup>31</sup> The rate remained fairly consistent at one in four (25%) marriages.

<sup>32</sup> This idea is developed more fully for another context in Peter Ward, “Courtship and Social Space in Nineteenth-Century English Canada,” *Canadian Historical Review*, vol.60 (1987), pp.1-34.

However, unmarried immigrants did find romance and friendship outside the immigrant community. At St. John's, for example, there were several instances of inter-ethnic marriages occurring at this church alone. Yet inter-ethnic marriage at St. John's was more rare than usual. The reason for this lies, in part, with a desire by some immigrants to marry fellow Germans. Even more significant, in the minds of the host Ottawa society, there was little reason to expect that Germans would not date or marry other Germans.

An article from February of 1953 in the Ottawa Citizen called out "Dresden Doll Identified As Bank Teller Christa Kunde".<sup>33</sup> The article was a follow-up to a photograph which had appeared in a previous edition of the newspaper but had described its subject as "unidentified". The apparently attractive Frau Kunde was tracked down by the Citizen and the newspaper ran a short story about her. The Kunde family were Reichsdeutsche (Dresden) refugees who had drifted to England after the war under the sponsorship of the International Refugee Organization. Christa Kunde had left her family in England to come to Canada as a domestic servant. Eventually, although the article does not say when or how, Frau Kunde became a bank teller. During her lunch break one day, Frau Kunde became the target of a Citizen photographer and some days later was interviewed by the same newspaper. At the conclusion of the interview, Frau Kunde was asked, "Are there any young German boys taking you out?". The direct question was answered with a curt, "Nobody is taking me out".

Why would the reporter modify his question with the word "German"? There are perhaps many reasons for this but none more evident than the ethnic distinctiveness of Frau Kunde to the reporter. For the reporter, the editor of the Citizen, and its readership, this lady was a foreigner. Who else would a foreigner date? While perhaps not meant to

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<sup>33</sup> Ottawa Citizen, 4 February 1953.

be anything but cute, the reporter's question actually was symptomatic of a larger attitude in the host Ottawa society that ethnics belonged and aspired to be with their own kind.<sup>34</sup>

For Frau Kunde and other unmarried Germans in Ottawa, this attitude would have caused, in most cases, one of two reactions. For some, it would have accelerated their desire to become more like their host society culturally in the hopes that structural assimilation would soon follow. For others, the re-affirmation of being different and isolated from mainstream society would have driven them to be with other people similarly prohibited from joining the core of the host society. The *Deutscher Abend* and other social spaces at St. John's provided just such a place for the foreigners in Ottawa's German-Canadian community.

With time, many single immigrants became married immigrants and at St. John's the number of new, growing families was dramatic during the 1950s. These new families which appear in the marriage register also re-appear in the baptismal records. This chapter will now turn to the evolution of the social space of the congregation of St. John's as it was reflected in these baptism records. Family strategies, in particular the naming of newborns, further defined and shaped ethnic cultural identities at St. John's and, by extension, that of the community.

Did German parents give their children German-sounding names? This question seems, perhaps, fairly innocent. Yet the family strategy of naming a child involved the conflation of several political and cultural forces, along with, in some cases, families' genealogical traditions.<sup>35</sup> From a wholly different perspective, Nancy Folbre argues that "[o]ne strategy for understanding them (family strategies) is to reject the traditional conceptual boundary between the family and the larger economy."<sup>36</sup> In this approach, it

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<sup>34</sup> The analysis of this article is inspired by the analysis of state discourse in Kay Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

<sup>35</sup> This is also argued in a different context in Lu Zhangti and Celia Milward, "Chinese Given Names Since the Cultural Revolution," *Names*, vol.37 (1989), pp.265-280.

<sup>36</sup> Nancy Folbre, "Family Strategy, Feminist Strategy" in Moch, et al, "Family Strategy.", p.115.

becomes feasible that the naming pattern practiced at St. John's may be interpreted as symbolizing the degree to which parents felt confident and secure within their broader cultural landscapes to give their children a visible marker of foreignness.

It may be argued that one of the most critical literary symbols a person carries is his / her name. As a cultural marker, personal names and surnames have been compared to pieces of fashion.<sup>37</sup> Both a name and a piece of clothing are cultural symbols which provide insight not only into an individual's taste or preference but also a much broader socio-economic setting. At the individual level, philosophers and psychologists argue that names carry so much meaning that people may be defined and even form a sense of themselves based in no small part on the name given to them by their parents.<sup>38</sup> With a renewed emphasis in history upon the symbolic resonance of culture and the need to read cultural texts in new ways, the study of names (onomastics) is perhaps one area upon which historians may place more emphasis as a tool for analysis.

Onomastics enjoys a rich scholarly tradition in disciplines such as philosophy, literary criticism, psychology, sociology, and ethnography / anthropology.<sup>39</sup> Historians, too, have ventured into the realm of onomastics and while still an under-utilized approach, the time and energy being accorded language and linguistic analysis gives reason to think names may become more important than has traditionally been expected.<sup>40</sup> In immigration history, Marcus Lee Hansen<sup>41</sup> was the first to utilize names to determine ethnicity and

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<sup>37</sup> Susan Cotts Watkins and Andrew S. London, "Personal Names and Cultural Change: A Study of Naming Patterns of Italians and Jews in the United States in 1910," Social Science History, vol.18 (1994), p.170.

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, Paul Steinberg, et. al., "The Inability to Name a Child," Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, vol.34 (1989), pp.221-226.

<sup>39</sup> Two very good examples are Stanley Lieberman and Eleanor O. Bell, "Children's First Names: An Empirical Study of Social Taste," American Journal of Sociology, vol.98 (1992), pp.511-554 and Susan S. Bean, "Ethnology and the Study of Proper Names," Anthropological Linguistics, vol.22 (1980), pp.305-316.

<sup>40</sup> The two most significant recent studies are Watkins and London, "Personal Names and Cultural Change.", pp.169-209 and Abraham Lavender, "United States Ethnic Groups in 1790: Given Names as Suggestions of Ethnic Identity," Journal of American Ethnic History, vol.9 (1989), pp.36-66.

<sup>41</sup> Lavender, "United States Ethnic Groups.", p.36.

subsequent work (and debate) has advanced historical onomastics to a somewhat higher degree of sophistication.<sup>42</sup> Yet the use of names remains very much in the realm of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Perhaps the major reason for this is that historians feel more comfortable and most informed when discussing the various cultural and demographic environments which surrounded various colonial and early post-colonial American settlements.<sup>43</sup> If adopting a socio-cultural perspective when studying names, cultural landscapes are critical variables which need to be understood and controlled. Thus, historians using names as cultural symbols are most comfortable when they can draw on a large body of secondary literature in order to provide context for their studies. In the discussion that follows, therefore, much attention will be paid to the cultural landscapes which surrounded the church and the congregation members.

One of the key points in Lutheran religious life was the ritual of baptism. Baptism not only reflected a commitment to the spiritual collective of a particular church, but it was often a very public event. Baptisms were featured in church programs and most times had special sermons scheduled to celebrate them.<sup>44</sup> A baptized child established a link of continuity which was reassuring to the congregation. This was an important symbolic activity for the church, especially its leadership which saw baptisms and confirmations as an extension of the church's lifeline.<sup>45</sup> Beyond this limited sphere of activity, though, baptisms in historical perspective tell researchers far more about the parents and the parents' cultural landscapes than the person being baptized. During the postwar era, furthermore, this moment did not operate in an isolated sphere.

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<sup>42</sup> In colonial American history, the use of names has been quite extensive. Daniel Scott Smith and Thomas Purvis have been especially adept at using personal names and surnames for historical investigation. For a penetrating critique (by Donald Akenson) of the 1790 American Census upon which Smith and Purvis rely and an exchange of contrary opinions see the debate in the William and Mary Quarterly, vol.41 (1984), pp.85-135 and 680-283.

<sup>43</sup> I must thank Professor Harvey Graff of the University of Texas at Dallas for pointing this out to me.

<sup>44</sup> Julius Bodensieck, ed., The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church, vol.1 (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), p.189.

<sup>45</sup> This idea seems to have emerged in the Lutheran Church especially since their major international conference (known as the Lund) in 1952. See Ibid., p.188.

In post-1945 Ottawa, the cultural landscapes which confronted families were a mixture of economic prosperity, massive suburbanization, mass popular culture, and a unique socio-political discourse which was undergoing a transformation from the anti-Nazi, anti-Japanese, and anti-Italian imagery of 1939-1945, to a more anti-Communist slant. All of these issues had a direct impact upon any family naming their child. For a family with a recent ethnic history as troublesome as German, Japanese, and Italian families had, such a decision became further complicated by how parents viewed themselves and how they thought others viewed them. In the discussion which follows, all of these factors will be discussed in conjunction with the pattern of naming that occurred at St. John's in the twenty years following World War II.

Table 3.1 -- Baptisms at St. John's by Nationality, 1945-1969<sup>46</sup>

Year	Number of Baptisms	German baptisms (by parents' names)	% of Total Baptisms	German baptisms (by children's names)	% of Total German baptisms
1945	9	5	55.6	1	20.0
1946	13	7	53.8	1	14.3
1947	13	4	30.8	0	0.0
1948	10	5	50.0	0	0.0
1949	15	4	26.7	0	0.0
1950	14	8	57.1	0	0.0
1951	15	7	46.7	2	28.6
1952	25	8	32.0	4	50.0
1953	20	7	35.0	3	42.9
1954	20	10	50.0	4	40.0
1955	37	32	86.5	9	28.1
1956	28	20	71.4	10	50.0
1957	54	45	83.3	23	51.1
1958	39	30	76.9	14	46.7
1959	47	32	68.1	11	34.4
1960	59	41	69.5	13	31.7

<sup>46</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, in the discussion which follows all calculations are derived from data held in this table.

1961	50	32	64.0	21	65.6
1962	33	23	69.7	7	30.4
1963	25	19	76.0	9	47.4
1964	27	19	70.4	10	52.6
1965	16	11	68.8	6	54.5
1966	2	2	100.0	2	100.0

Source: AO, Rath Papers, Parish Register, Baptism Records 1945 to 1966.

The significant demographic impact of German immigration upon the Ottawa community is reflected in the number of baptisms as recorded in Table 1. In the five years prior to the return of normal immigration rules for Germans (1945-1950), the average number of baptisms was 12. Yet in the next five years (1950-1954) that rose to just under 19, and in the following five years (1955-1959) to 41. Allowing for the natural increase in birth-rates which occurred all over Canada, cannot explain an average which more than tripled in ten years. Certainly, the postwar baby-boom, a term which has always carried with it an image of rock 'n roll, hamburgers, and suburbia, also included a decidedly foreign aspect introduced by the massive influx of post-1945 immigrants.

The correlation of increased immigration and the surge in baptisms at St. John's also enforces the idea that the new immigrants constituted the beginning of a new community. By being in a position of demographic dominance over the oldtimer Germans in Ottawa, the newcomers would have experienced a heightened sense of "otherness" compared to older, more established communities. Areas such as Kitchener-Waterloo which held traditionally large German populations absorbed the bulk of the newcomers into their institutions and communities and eased, somewhat, the transition into Canadian society.<sup>47</sup> However, an area such as metropolitan Ottawa with a tiny and much older pre-1950 German-Canadian community, was poorly equipped demographically and structurally to play the role of 'Canadianizers'. In this respect, the Ottawa Germans

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<sup>47</sup> This is the argument in Gottlieb Liebbrandt, Little Paradise: The Saga of the German Canadians of Waterloo County, Ontario, 1800-1975 (Kitchener: Allprint Company Limited, 1980), pp.273-313.

differed quite dramatically from not just their ethnic brethren in Kitchener-Waterloo but so too the contemporary Italian immigrants of Toronto.

Franca Iacovetta and John Zucchi's studies of Italian-Canadian Toronto present a community which developed from the late nineteenth-century until the late 1960s.<sup>48</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that in Iacovetta's study of post-1945 immigrants, the Italian newcomers were able to call upon and be offered a range of institutional and economic assistance. Iacovetta states that, "[i]n Toronto, the newcomers, at least initially, took a back seat to the Italian oldtimers."<sup>49</sup> The brazen, confident image of the Italian community which Iacovetta and Zucchi's studies describe had much to do with the demographic base established in the nineteenth century. Indeed, the construction of Italian-Canadian identities probably took on different patterns than the Germans of Ottawa, not just for ethno-cultural distinctiveness but so, too, the differences in their respective demographic and institutional base.

Table 3.1 also suggests that the rate at which visible "German" names were assigned cannot be divorced from the political and socio-cultural climate in which they were made. Consider, first, that from 1945 to 1950, there were only two German names given to newborn children, while 33 German children were baptized. The explanation for this needs to be examined both within the private sphere of family decision-making and the public spheres of cultural and political discourse.

In the twenty years after World War II, mass popular culture definitely played a significant role in family strategies. Radio, television, and film were perhaps the three most prominent vehicles of the new cultural images of the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>50</sup> German

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<sup>48</sup> John Zucchi, Italians in Toronto: Development of a National Identity 1875-1935 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988) and Franca Iacovetta, Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992).

<sup>49</sup> Iacovetta, Such Hardworking People, p. 143.

<sup>50</sup> The Liberal government of the immediate postwar era recognized that these three forms constituted the future of 'Canadian' culture and they responded by establishing the Massey Commission to deal with the problems, present and future, of these mediums. The government felt that the development of a Canadian

Canadians and German immigrants to Ottawa were not immune to these forces. In fact, mass popular culture became a major point of debate within the community by the early 1970s.<sup>51</sup> How, though, would mass popular culture have influenced a family's decision to name a child? One way it would have contributed would have been the propagation of stereotypes and clichés that depicted German "badguys" (i.e. Nazis) in major films, popular novels, and even radio dramas of the postwar era. The myths which surrounded Germans, particularly the evil Aryan typology that the Nazi propaganda machine had put forth to the world, reminded German immigrants as well as the host society that Germans were different. A feeling of foreignness breeds a sense of "otherness" and pushes an individual, a family, and sometimes a community, to the periphery of society. Mass popular culture, by re-enforcing Nazi stereotypes, not only paid a bizarre tribute to Joseph Goebbels, but also had a clear influence upon the German-Canadian community of Ottawa.

In a submission to the Heritage Ontario Congress of 1972, the German-Canadian community of Ottawa was emphatic about the negative images of Germans prevalent in mass media and popular culture. They wrote that;

"continued propaganda and the promotion of hatred against the German ethnocultural group are of grave concern. This practice applies to all media to a greater or lesser degree, but the most flagrant abuse of Human Rights is taking place continuously in the showing of films and programmes on public and private television networks...This continuous bombardment of the minds of uncountable viewers with hate propaganda is achieving its goals. These deplorable actions against the German ethno-cultural group are causing many unnecessary social and psychological pressures and inhibit the cultural expression and contribution by the German community."<sup>52</sup>

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culture was critical to the emergence of Canada as a strong, independent nation-state. See Paul Litt, The Muses, The Masses, and the Massey Commission (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p.250.

<sup>51</sup> See the editorial "Apathy?" in Ottawa Herald, 7 January 1971.

<sup>52</sup> Ottawa Herald, 1 August 1972.

The powerful images of this passage, “propaganda”, “flagrant abuse” and “bombardment” portray a community which felt, culturally, under siege. Real or imagined, there were German Canadians in Ottawa who felt discriminated against by the entertainment industry.

From this perspective, therefore, it is not unexpected that many German families reacted to the negative portrayal of them in popular culture by subsuming their visible identity in various ways. Parents looking into the future of their newborn children saw, in the postwar era, a future of white Anglo-Saxon images as well as a future of Nazi stereotypes. A person named Heinz Friederich Baumann in that future would be far more stigmatized than Henry Frederick Baumann. Not surprisingly, at St. John’s, this Anglicization of names was the most common pattern.<sup>53</sup> But the German ethnics at St. John’s were not pioneers when it came to this practice.

German-Canadian families, especially those who were the children or grandchildren of immigrants, had a history of having their visible identity subsumed in times of social and political unrest. Before, during, and after World War I, German names underwent a metamorphosis, as ‘Mueller’ became ‘Miller’, ‘Schmidt’ was re-worked into ‘Smith’, and the unofficial German-Canadian capital city, Berlin, Ontario transformed into Kitchener.<sup>54</sup> The disappearing act also took the form of denying ethnicity to census takers, as evidenced by the amazing decline in German-Canadian population before and after the war.<sup>55</sup> Perhaps at no time in Canadian history has John Higham’s theory of

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<sup>53</sup> Names such as Henry, Frederick, Carl, John, appear in the baptism register after 1945 while in the 1895 to 1910 era these same names were Heinrich, Friedrich (or Fritz), Karl, and Hans. AO, Rath Papers, Baptism Register, 1895 to 1972.

<sup>54</sup> Gerhard Bassler argues that the name change from Berlin to Kitchener was imposed upon the German-Canadian community by non-democratic political actions. However, even Bassler concedes that German-Canadian businessmen were happy to see the ‘Made in Berlin’ labels on their products changed. See Gerhard Bassler, *The German Canadian Mosaic Today and Yesterday: Identities, Roots, and Heritage* (Ottawa: German Canadian Congress, 1991), pp.65-67.

<sup>55</sup> In 1911, the Canadian Census recorded German Canadians as comprising 5.6% of the population and in 1921 that figure fell to 3.4%. Presumably, this disappearance would have been easiest for second, third, or later generations of German Canadians who would have spoke excellent English. Figures taken from Dirk Hoerder, “German-Speaking Immigrants: Co-Founders or Mosaic?” *Zeitschrift fuer Kanada-Studien*, vol.14 (1994), p.56.

“nativism” been more evident.<sup>56</sup> Massive public pressure by the Canadian government, through internment and the ban on public German-language usage, plus public violence towards German Canadians provided all the impetus needed by second and third generation German Canadians whose, often, unaccented English would allow them to become a malleable ethnic for as long as the crisis demanded.

The legacy of the World War I experience, and the important differences of World War II, have been examined most extensively by Robert Keyserlingk. Keyserlingk’s focus upon political motives as expressed, chiefly, through internment, has provided an important half to the story, that is the grand-level forces which impacted German Canadians.<sup>57</sup> Historians have yet to deal with the expression of this macro-level force at the level of social experience. How did families react to being perceived, for the second time in twenty years, as enemies of Canada? What was their reaction to the “new” brand of nativism which faced them in World War II? The study of child names presents some insight, although admittedly limited, into these questions.

Of the 66 parents who named their children from 1945 to 1950 in St. John’s, each one would have been born around World War I. The lack of much German immigration after 1929, and even less to urban areas of Canada, suggests that the majority of these 66 people were born or came of age in Canada.<sup>58</sup> These 66 proceeded through youth and adolescence at a time when being German was to be a foreign element in the Canadian population and even, as Art Grenke as shown, to be an enemy-alien.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, the

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<sup>56</sup> “Nativism” is the persecution by a majority ethnic group of a minority group in times of heightened political, economic, or social pressure. John Higham, Strangers in the Land: Patterns in American Nativism, 1860-1923 2nd ed. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988) and Howard Palmer, Patterns of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1982).

<sup>57</sup> See, for example, Robert Keyserlingk’s, “‘Agents Within the Gates.’ The Search for Nazi Subversives in Canada during World War II,” Canadian Historical Review, vol.66 (1985), pp.211-239 and “The Canadian Government’s Attitude Towards Germans and German Canadians in World War II,” Canadian Ethnic Studies, vol.16 (1984), pp.16-28.

<sup>58</sup> Bassler, The German Canadians, pp.46-47.

<sup>59</sup> Art Grenke, “The German Community of Winnipeg and the English-Canada Response to World War I,” Canadian Ethnic Studies, vol.20 (1988), pp.21-44.

interwar years of German-Canadian history were a time of limited socio-cultural organization, limited immigration, and for many, an ambivalent relationship with happenings in Germany. By 1939, many of these postwar parents were of a mature age and aware of the wartime, anti-Nazi (and, in 1939, anti-Communist) political climate which faced them.

The political discourse which German ethnics confronted at the beginning of World War II was one of mixed feelings. Some, like the editors of the Globe & Mail, went to great lengths to remind their readers that not “all Germans are Nazis”.<sup>60</sup> Yet there remained a significant number of people among the general population who feared for Nazi fifth columnists and saboteurs. This ambivalence is perhaps best exemplified by the following quote from a September, 1939 editorial of the Globe & Mail:

War is a prolific breeder of rumours, and in Canada many of these affect citizens with German, even apparently German, names. A whisper is sufficient to set stories going, and soon the victim's life is made miserable. The unfairness of this is stressed by papers throughout the country, which mention specific instances.<sup>61</sup>

The editorial then relayed stories about families in Alberta and Southern Ontario. In each instance, the family had been persecuted by local citizens for the “crime” of holding a German name, although in each mentioned instance these “Germans” were Swiss, third-generation German Canadians, and another a Czech. Interestingly, this editorial placed particular emphasis upon the wrong-headedness of associating nationality with names.<sup>62</sup> This suggests that there was, therefore, reason for German ethnics in Canada to see their names as badges which marked them “enemy alien”, “foreigner”, and “suspicious”.

During World War II and the public disclosure of the atrocities which that war precipitated on millions of innocent lives, many German Canadians were decidedly uneasy with their hyphenated status. After the war, a German-Canadian family strategy as

<sup>60</sup> Globe & Mail, 5 September 1939.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 13 September 1939.

<sup>62</sup> The title of the editorial was “Never Mind the Names”.

significant as naming a child was not, nor could not have been, made without thought or care to the history behind them, the cultural landscape which presently confronted them and, perhaps most importantly, which would confront their children in the future. In the case of the Ottawa German Canadians who attended St. John's from 1945 to 1950, this decision seems to have overwhelmingly taken the same shape as the former 'Muellers' and 'Schmidts' of the World War I era.

After 1950, there was a change in this pattern. The most obvious was the re-appearance of German names. From 1951 to 1954, there were 13 German names given, from 1955 to 1958, the number was 56, and from 1959 to 1965 the figure rose to 77. In each of these periods, however, the corresponding rate of German names to the number of German couples was 40.7 % (1951-1954), 44.1% (1955-1958), and 43.5% (1959-1965). So while markedly greater with respect to the immediate postwar era (1945-1950), the rate of German names assigned to German children was fairly consistent from 1950 to 1965. What is also of significance is that by the mid 1950s, most of the church's German congregation were immigrants and not Canadian-born.

This feature of the church shifting from 'ethnic German' to 'immigrant German' suggests closer inspection of the table and the naming pattern needs to be further analyzed. The church, overall, as a "German" public space certainly became far more concentrated after 1950. Consider the percentage of all baptisms which involved German parents; prior to 1955 the greatest rate of German baptisms was 50%, but after 1955 the rate is never below 64%, and from 1955 to 1959 it is actually 77.6%. Thus, even though the church was decidedly more German after the influx of German immigration, this did not breed an increasingly concentrated German-Canadian mentalité with respect to the naming of children. The immigrants were less tepid, perhaps, than Canadian-born German ethnics but they were not immune from the same fears and concerns. Indeed, even with the influx of German immigrants, the social / public space of St. John's did not create a proportionately stronger German cultural presence in the church over the long term. Such

an argument seems more probable when it is combined with the church's history. In 1965, there was a departure of fifty congregational members in 1965 to create a "more German" church, Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church.<sup>63</sup>

As a cultural marker, then, baptism rates between 1945 and 1965 suggest some important ideas with respect to German-Canadian identities. First, they signify a sense of German cultural insecurity. The desire to erase visible markers of ethnicity is made from a position of powerlessness, disinterest, and a feeling of cultural isolation which is at the periphery of society. Secondly, those German Canadians who were in Canada during World War II may have felt a genuine foreignness from Germany and all that the Third Reich represented. Thus, the decision to give their child a non-German name, may have been a product of a feeling of estrangement from the very culture they, at least symbolically, represented. A third aspect of German-Canadian identity which is suggested by the 1945-1950 naming pattern is that of bewilderment. If a family was unsure of itself and unsure of the future that the cultural landscape held, it would probably choose a "safe" option. Giving their child a non-German name was very much a safe option, especially with the clear emergence by 1945 of an Anglo-American influenced mass culture in the host society. Importantly, it should be recognized that all three of these identity characteristics occurred because the public (cultural and political discourses) and private (family strategies) spheres of their lives were inseparable. Therefore, the 369 children of German parents who were baptized at St. John's in the first twenty years after World War II, were symbolic of family decisions confronting political and socio-cultural movements operating at levels far beyond the household.

Single immigrants, married immigrants, and immigrant families all used the social space at St. John's. Single immigrants found the opportunity to meet with one another

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<sup>63</sup> Beglo, "Lutherans in Ottawa", p.56.

and to find companionship. In the foreign, culturally estranged atmosphere of Ottawa in the postwar era, the church played a significant role as a harbour for German ethnics. Married immigrants changed that German ethnic character of St. John's by re-inforcing the German demographic dominance over other ethnics, such as Lutheran Danes and Norwegians who also belonged to the church. The children of these married immigrants and other German Canadians at the church became, however, symbols of the changing ethnic identities of the congregation members. With the impact of Nazi stereotypes and the "German equals foreigner" discourse prevalent in the host Ottawa society, children born to German ethnic parents had an important element of their visible identity, their names, 'de-Germanized'. With English sounding names, these children were further encouraged and supported to become as Anglo-Canadian (or in some rare cases Franco-Canadian) as the society which surrounded them. The impact on the church as a German-Canadian social space was significant as the German Catholic church, St. Albertus, founded in 1951, became by the end of the 1960s, far more important as an area of German social interaction.<sup>64</sup> By 1965 it was perhaps inevitable that those parents who wished to maintain their visible German ethnicity left St. John's to form a new congregation which would hold be committed to propagating a "German" social space.

The experience of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church was symbolic of the community as a whole. German immigrants and German ethnics needed a social space in which to interact and to find companionship. They were, especially in the first ten years after World War II, "others" in Ottawa. As well, ethnic identities of congregation members underwent a process of 'Anglo-Canadianization' in response to pressures occurring in mass popular culture and the general political discourse of the public. Those who did not wish to be a part of this process departed from the church community and

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<sup>64</sup> This impression is taken from various issues of the Ottawa Herald (from its inception in 1970 until 1975) which featured St. Albertus and Martin Luther in every issue but mentioned St. John's less often when reflecting back to the mid 1960s.

established new, more concentrated areas of German social space. Indeed, the German-Canadian community of Ottawa was not a monolithic, static group. It was fragmented and individuals adopted many different coping strategies and life style choices. Along with this came the negotiation and constant re-structuring of their ethnic identities. The German Canadians of Ottawa, while sharing an ethnocultural heritage, did not share a single ethnocultural experience.

#### **Chapter Four: A Move to Multiculturalism: Social Welfare and the German Benevolent Society, 1955-1970**

In 1955, the German Benevolent Society was formed and immediately joined the churches in dealing with the problems of German immigrants. While the churches remained focal points for a range of community activities, the Benevolent Society was a 'pro-active' institution which engaged the community and the Ottawa host society. Thus, while the study of St. John's Lutheran Church was perceived as an area of German social / public space, the Benevolent Society needs to be perceived as an agent of German-Canadian historical experience in postwar Ottawa.

This chapter looks at how the German Benevolent Society provided both relief for needy Germans as well as creating an environment which expressed community ethno-cultural identities. Beyond acting as an outlet for socially conscious German Canadians, can this organization can also be interpreted as a cultural marker of the community? As Robert Harney has said, benevolent societies "gave texture and definition to ethnic identity where, initially, only migrant loneliness had existed. In this way, the early benevolent societies became agents of the modern reality and the modern concept of ethnicity."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the German Benevolent Society's early establishment and longevity (with respect to the community) made it a senior member of the Ottawa German-Canadian social network. While originally a charitable organization, this institution evolved with changes that occurred in the community it served and the socio-economic and political context in which it was situated. Therefore an examination of the founding and structure of this institution, the activities in which it was involved, and the mentalité with which the organization operated, can reveal a great deal about the community as a whole.

From the surviving records of this organization, plus the useful insight provided by German language newspapers, there is an opportunity to re-construct important

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Harney, "Introduction", Polyphony, vol.2 (1979), p.1.

developmental aspects of this institution's history. Institutional records are particularly valuable because they provide insight into the community they served with a higher degree of sensitivity and empathy than centralized, bureaucratic government records.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the records of the German Benevolent Society are a rich mixture of correspondence, financial records, social welfare case records, and legal documents. Of particular significance is the presence of the Society's original constitution of 1955, its investiture of incorporation in 1963 and a government-sponsored questionnaire of 1973. These three key documents provide a temporal overview and act almost as pillars around which to re-construct the changing nature of the Benevolent Society. When those three and other institutional records are combined with accounts provided by German-language newspapers, there is further possibility for a richly textured study of how this institution interacted and evolved within the larger context of the Ottawa region.

Like all the case studies in this thesis, this chapter emphasizes the evolution of German-Canadian identities. Here, these identities are examined as they were given voice through the people involved, as members and clients, with this organization. Yet is it possible to extend this analysis beyond the membership of the executive and rank-and-file, or the needy who were aided, to the wider Ottawa German-Canadian community? As this chapter will show, the Benevolent Society was acutely aware of the needs, concerns, and aspirations of the community it served. It also was very aware of, and susceptible to, cultural and social welfare movements among ethnic Germans all across Canada and among Canadians in general.<sup>3</sup> Because of this sensitivity to national movements, it is possible to examine how this particular institution interacted with major German-Canadian post-war

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<sup>2</sup> Government records can be effective, however, when used with careful consideration. See Franca Iacovetta, "Making New Canadians: Social Workers, Women, and the Reshaping of Immigrant Families," in Iacovetta and Marianne Valverde, eds., Gender Conflicts: Essays in Women's History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp.261-303.

<sup>3</sup> The historiography concerned with social welfare is growing but still in its infancy. See the helpful collection in Raymond Blake and Jeff Keshen, Social Welfare Policy in Canada: Historical Readings (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1995). For Ontario, see James Struthers, The Limits of Affluence: Welfare in Ontario, 1920-1970 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

movements. As a result, this institution provides a valuable entrepôt for the study of the community within its local environment and the national German-Canadian population.<sup>4</sup>

### **Socio-cultural and Political Origins of the German Benevolent Society:**

The German Benevolent Society of Ottawa was formed in February of 1955 at a meeting in the Alexandra Hotel. It was founded at the urging of local religious leaders, who felt that the immigrant demands upon the church were becoming excessive for individual congregations.<sup>5</sup> These demands were, in part, a result of the combination of high levels of German immigration to Canada (around 30,000 in 1954) and a harsh Ottawa winter during 1954 and 1955. Furthermore, as James Struthers argues in his major study of Ontario welfare programs, government relief agencies during the 1950s were often unable to provide adequately for the needy.<sup>6</sup> Besides these local structural factors, however, there was also a broader cultural motivation behind the formation of the Benevolent Society.

The founding of this fraternal was part of a larger German-Canadian movement to organize and to assert itself as a strong self-supporting ethnic group. Reflections by the German-language press on the tenth-year anniversary of the Ottawa German Benevolent Society (in 1965) pointed out that the founders felt their new fraternal should be in the spirit of other German-Canadian benevolent societies such as the "Council of Friendship" of Kitchener-Waterloo.<sup>7</sup> That German-Canadian community leaders in Ottawa in 1955 were aware of and sensitive to movements among German communities outside of their own was an important cornerstone to this institution. Not surprisingly, after its founding, the German

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<sup>4</sup> This approach has been used effectively, albeit in another context, in Shirley Tillotson, "Citizen Participation in the Welfare State: An Experiment, 1945-57," Canadian Historical Review, vol.75 (1994), pp.511-542.

<sup>5</sup> This paragraph is taken largely from Der Nordwesten, "Zehnjähriges Jubiläum des deutschen Hilfsvereins Ottawa, Inc.", 16 February 1965.

<sup>6</sup> Struthers, The Limits of Affluence, p.143.

<sup>7</sup> Der Nordwesten, "Zehnjähriges." The subtle but significant encouragement of the German embassy to the formation of this new organization is reflected in Der Herold, "General versammlung des Deutschen Hilfsvereins", 3 April 1965, p.4.

Benevolent Society's letterhead immediately proclaimed its affiliation with the national German-Canadian umbrella organization, the Trans-Canada Alliance of German Canadians. Thus the founding of this community-oriented fraternal may be seen also as reflective of a greater movement among German Canadians to organize relief agencies and immigrant aid societies.

This development among German Canadians can be traced to the work of the Canadian Christian Council for the Resettlement of Refugees (CCCRR), Canadian Lutheran World Relief, and other German-Canadian relief agencies who were critical participants in the handling of refugees in and from postwar Germany. These institutions not only operated relief camps in occupied Allied sectors, but also served the interests of German Canadians by lobbying officials in Ottawa responsible for immigration.<sup>8</sup> While by all historical accounts a success on the international stage<sup>9</sup>, it also had a significant impact on Germans in Canada.

The postwar co-operation among all the different fractions of the German-Canadian national community signaled a new style of relationship among "Volksdeutsche" and "Reichsdeutsche" groups. Gottlieb Leibbrandt points out that during a meeting in Ottawa in December of 1948, members of the Canadian Society for German Relief and the Winnipeg German Association discussed the need for a federal level of organization to protect the interests of Germans in Canada.<sup>10</sup> The most significant product of these early discussions was the Trans-Canada Alliance of German Canadians, which was formed in

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<sup>8</sup> The importance of the CCCRR is argued by Gerhard Bassler, Donald Avery, and Angelika Sauer, among others. For example see Angelika Sauer, "A Matter of Domestic Policy? Canadian Immigration Policy and the Admission of Germans, 1945-1950," Canadian Historical Review, vol. 74 (1993), pp.239-247.

<sup>9</sup> An interesting first-hand account of CCCRR activity in postwar Germany can be found in Willi Wanka, "Aufakt zur deutschen Nachkriegseinwanderung nach Kanada," German Canadian Yearbook, vol.9 (1986), pp.125-140.

<sup>10</sup> Gottlieb Leibbrandt, Little Paradise: The Saga of the German Canadians of Waterloo County, Ontario, 1800-1975 (Kitchener: Allprint Company Limited, 1980), p.280. This sort of history, written by a member of the immigrant group, can be an invaluable tool for the historian. It not only informs with respect to data, but often includes documents and provides a narrative which can be read, in part, like a memoir.

1951. The Alliance was committed to overcoming differences among German Canadians, new and old, that were predicated on religious, regional, class, and political barriers. Instead, the Alliance saw German culture as a powerful unifying principle.

The Alliance's primary mission was to harmonize and promote cultural activities of the regional and local German-Canadian organizations all across Canada. In a ten-point charter, the Alliance's goals revolved around the "furthering of German traditions", care for Germans in need both in Europe and in Canada, the promotion of German-Canadian co-operation via a national press, the encouragement of greater immigration to Canada from Germany, development of a research institute, and promotion of economic trade between Canada and German-speaking countries.<sup>11</sup> The founding of this national organization was the product of German Canadians intent on preserving their ethno-cultural identity, with a perceived awareness of their "otherness"<sup>12</sup> from "Canadian" society. An illustrative example of this was the Alliance's attention to the establishment of a network of German-language schools designed to supplement Canadian education which, because of their Saturday meetings, were known as the Sonnabendschulen.<sup>13</sup>

Without belabouring the point, the second article of the Alliance's charter is worthy of closer inspection. It states that the Alliance will promote a "better understanding of Canadian institutions; information about the accomplishments of the best Canadian ideals and cultural traditions to be disseminated among German Canadians, with special emphasis

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<sup>11</sup> A copy of the charter can be found in National Archives of Canada, MG 31, H 39 (hereafter von Cardinal Papers), vol.3, file "TCA Charter 1952". A more accessible copy of the charter may also be found in Leibbrandt, Little Paradise, pp.284-286.

<sup>12</sup> Usually, "otherness" is a concept used most liberally in post-colonial studies of race. However, in this thesis it is used to describe the situation where an ethnic group perceives itself or is perceived by people not in the ethnic group to be of little or no concern to those in power who make decisions which affect them. As it is used here to describe the mentalité surrounding a white Northern European ethnic group, its changing nature over the twenty years (1955-1975) discussed in this chapter is understandable. For a valuable discussion of the 'Other' in a Canadian context see Kay Anderson, Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), esp. pp.15-17.

<sup>13</sup> Gerhard Bassler, The German Canadian Mosaic Today and Yesterday: Identities, Roots, and Heritage (Ottawa: German Canadian Congress, 1991), p.13.

upon the spirit of cooperation between the two great cultures.”<sup>14</sup> This text is shaped, in part, on the romantic notion so prevalent historically in German culture.<sup>15</sup> Instead of saying that German Canadians will be encouraged to become “Canadianized” and thereby culturally assimilated, it says only that the “best” of Canadian culture and ideals will be promoted. Thus, rather than assimilation, the Alliance promoted **acculturation**.<sup>16</sup> For an ethnic group which was so stigmatized by the atrocities of its ethnic brethren only six years earlier, this was a remarkable degree of confidence. Yet German immigrants and German ethnics have a tradition in North America of regarding their cultural heritage with an, at-times, almost religious fervour.<sup>17</sup>

For all its talk of ethnocultural preservation, what is perhaps most significant of the Alliance was that it was a national organization which sought to fulfill the needs of German Canadians, whether “Reichsdeutsche” or “Volksdeutsche”, Protestant or Catholic, urban or rural. It was, symbolically, a new sort of German cultural organization. It also symbolized a restored sense of purpose and determination among some German Canadians to protect their ethno-cultural heritage.<sup>18</sup> After the nativist hostilities of World War II and particularly World War I, Germans in Canada had begun to move away from much of their German heritage, especially their language. The Alliance was therefore both a new and a renewed sense of purpose for German Canadians and, especially, for the quarter million of German-speaking immigrants who were to come after the founding of the Alliance.

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<sup>14</sup> Liebbrandt, Little Paradise, p.284.

<sup>15</sup> A concise, fascinating account of this trend can be found in Antoine Berman, The Experience of the Foreign: Culture and Translation in Romantic Germany trans. by S. Heyvaert (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), esp., pp. 11-21.

<sup>16</sup> As a concept, acculturation is used to define the process whereby group “A” and group “B” interact to produce a group which is both “A” and “B”. Contrast this with assimilation where “A” and “B” produce “A”.

<sup>17</sup> The importance of romantic visions of German culture will be explicitly examined in the last case study.

<sup>18</sup> Bassler, The German Canadian Mosaic, p.12. Bassler argues that, nationally, these Germans committed to preservation of their cultural heritage were a minority among the larger “silent ethnics” of the group.

Part of this move for organization, as expressed on local and regional levels, involved benevolent societies. In a list prepared by the Trans Canada Alliance in September of 1951, there were German relief societies found in Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, Kitchener, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, and Vancouver.<sup>19</sup> All of these cities had traditionally strong numbers of German Canadians, and had a base of 'oldtimers' willing and able to organize for and with newcomers. In Ottawa, the history of the Germans in the city, as shown earlier, was slightly different. Consequently, their benevolent society was a combination of a few oldtimers and more newcomers. This was to have ramifications on the principles which guided the Ottawa German Benevolent Society.

German culture was important to established German Canadians in the early 1950s, including those within the German-Canadian community of Ottawa, but the records of the Benevolent Society of Ottawa suggest it was secondary in the minds of many German immigrants. Survival, in the form of food, shelter, and employment was paramount in the early years of restored German immigration. Furthermore, although aware of broader cultural movements, the Benevolent Society founders were far more local in perspective. Specifically, the founders were concerned foremost with the post-1950 wave of new German immigrants arriving in Ottawa. This is suggested by the Society's by-laws, drawn up on 16 February 1955, which state the mission of their organization; to help Germans and German-Canadians in need in the city of Ottawa and to give advice and assistance to German immigrants.<sup>20</sup> The word "culture" does not appear in the document. This is significant in at least one respect.

First, it reflects that in the Ottawa community, Germans did not place as great an emphasis upon cultural retention, initially, as they did the sense of kinship towards their fellow German ethnics. Unlike the Toronto Italian Immigrant Aid Society created in 1952

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<sup>19</sup>List found in von Cardinal Papers, vol.1, file "Correspondence: Embassy and German Canadian Societies", "Liste deutsch-kanadischer Vereinigungen, 8 September 1951".

<sup>20</sup>A copy of the Constitution and by-laws can be found in NAC, MG 28, vol.98 (hereafter Alliance of German-Speaking Organizations' Papers), file "German Benevolent Society, Inc.".

which promoted Italian immigration into “the Canadian way of life”<sup>21</sup>, the Ottawa German aid society had much less ambitious notions. The differences between these two parallel organizations lay partly in the Italian aid society being the product mainly of “oldtimers” who had become acculturated to Toronto’s mainstream society while in Ottawa the founders were primarily less-confident newcomers. The Ottawa Germans who founded the Benevolent Society did not see themselves as cultural agents, but rather as ethnic kin aiding the material and spiritual well-being of those in need. Furthermore, the Ottawa founders were confronted with different local conditions than those faced by national leaders based in Kitchener.

The importance of the local cultural landscape which surrounded the Benevolent Society is also suggested by the section devoted to Society membership. Membership in the Society was said to be open to anyone “German and Canadians of German origin”.<sup>22</sup> Such restrictive criteria reflected a few important elements of the community’s mentalité. First, the Society did not differentiate between “Reichsdeutsche” and “Volksdeutsche”, nor did it deny the role of non-immigrant German Canadians, i.e. ethnic German Canadians, in the community. This pattern of selective inclusion while barring the participation of the majority of the Ottawa host society, welcomed Germans of varying degree. This was not, as Art Grenke has observed in Winnipeg, historical practice for modern German mutual benefit societies.<sup>23</sup> Instead, it was in the spirit of the post-World War II Trans-Canada Alliance, which went to great lengths to develop a pan-German-Canadian mentalité among its membership.

There is, however, also a sense of remoteness reflected in this membership criteria. Instead of assuming that they precluded participation from non-Germans, it is conceivable

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<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Franca Iacovetta, Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992), p.127.

<sup>22</sup> A copy of this document can be found in the Alliance of German-Speaking Organizations’ Papers, file “German Benevolent Society”; quote from p.1.

<sup>23</sup> Arthur Grenke, The German Community in Winnipeg 1872-1919 (New York: AMS Press, 1991), pp.66-89.

that the founders had little reason to expect help from outside its ethnic boundaries. The developing welfare state was still in its infancy in the early 1950s and even then government-sponsored welfare was concerned first and foremost with its Canadian-born citizens. Consequently, the Ontario government and many social activists promoted community-based welfare organizations.<sup>24</sup> In 1955, with the Ottawa Welfare Council in its infancy and the Ottawa Citizenship Council not yet formed, German Canadians (and other hyphenated Canadians) in Ottawa felt compelled to care for their own.<sup>25</sup> There was also the linguistic barrier which discouraged many immigrants from seeking government aid and instead took newcomers, first, to the local ethnic church.

Even after the establishment of city-based immigrant aid agencies in Ottawa, the Benevolent Society still had a need within the community.<sup>26</sup> For, as Franca Iacovetta points out about postwar Toronto, municipal immigrant aid agencies promoted "Canadianization" -- i.e. forced assimilation -- along with genuine humanist concerns for the immigrants.<sup>27</sup> This sort of two-pronged effort provided needed care for immigrants but it also reminded the less-fortunate, especially, that they were "others", and removed from Canadian society.

### **The Structural Growth of the Benevolent Society:**

The German Benevolent Society of Ottawa was indeed a reflection of the community it served. In 1955, the community was young and only in its infancy with respect to organization. Perhaps not surprisingly, the Benevolent Society made small

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<sup>24</sup> Tillotson, "Citizen Participation," p.513.

<sup>25</sup> Both the Italian and Ukrainian communities of Ottawa had a concern for the social welfare of community members in the post-World War II era. See Myron Momryk, "Ukrainians in Ottawa," *Polyphony*, vol.10 (1988), pp.83-95; David Dirks, "Local Community and Ethnic Community: The Italians," commissioned report by the City of Ottawa, 1978; and Franca Draghi, "The Italians of Ottawa: Final Report," unpublished paper, University of Ottawa, 1974.

<sup>26</sup> There are several examples of cases in the von Cardinal Papers, vol.2, file "German Benevolent Society - Aid".

<sup>27</sup> Franca Iacovetta, "'Making New Canadians': Social Workers, Women, and the Reshaping of Immigrant Families," in Iacovetta and Marianne Valverde, *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp.261-303.

strides with respect to membership and influence during its first few years.<sup>28</sup> Demographics and economics were to have a major impact upon the Ottawa German community in the 1950s, and the Benevolent Society was to reflect this change in a prominent way. The ‘success’ of the organization in accomplishing this was noted in 1960 by the national German-language newspaper Der Courier, which called the Benevolent Society the “representative organization” of the Ottawa community.<sup>29</sup>

To demonstrate that the Benevolent Society was “representative,” it is perhaps useful to provide a brief structural overview of the Society in terms of its membership, leadership, and its financial vitality. Institutional records of the Society reflect its remarkable growth demographically and financially:

Table 4.1 -- Membership Levels of the German Benevolent Society of Ottawa

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Members</u>	<u>German-Canadian Population of Ottawa</u>
1955	9	3, 938 (1951)
1962	42	9, 332 (1961)
1963	205	
1973	1100	10, 570 (1971)

Source: Alliance of German-Speaking Organizations’ Papers, file “German Benevolent Society”; By-laws of German Benevolent Society (16 February 1955), Investiture of Incorporation (2 December 1963), Questionnaire from Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Service (8 June 1973) and von Cardinal Papers, vol.2, file “German Benevolent Society Correspondence -- Applications for Membership” (1961/62), Canada Census, 1951-1971.

This table reflects an unusual pattern with respect to membership and the community’s population. By the end of the 1950s, the core of German immigration to Canada (and Ottawa) was complete. Yet, membership in the community’s most significant non-secular, charitable organization did not reflect that growth until three to five years later. This

<sup>28</sup> Der Nordwesten, 16 November 1965.

<sup>29</sup> Der Courier, 24 December 1960.

suggests that immigrants to Ottawa took some time to adjust to their new homes and devoted their time initially to work, family, and social activities. Conversely, it also reflects that within a relatively short time, this community was able to form a significant base of organization in which charitable and fraternal activity was a part.

While membership grew in a unilinear fashion, what is equally significant is that the ethnic character of the Benevolent Society also evolved. Although the original charter called for a "German" heritage as a pre-requisite for joining, by the early 1960s membership was decidedly inter-ethnic. On 27 February 1963, Kurt von Cardinal wrote a letter in which he stated, "our (the German Benevolent Society's) membership is made up of persons of German, Austrian, Hungarian, Swiss, French-Canadian and British origin. We also have some members of Polish - and Yugoslav (sic) extraction."<sup>30</sup> This change in membership, as will be discussed later, reflected a change in mentalité, among the German-Canadian community of Ottawa, to a multicultural perspective.

A socio-cultural institution is only effective if it is stable financially. This is particularly true in the case of welfare-oriented organizations. The financial growth of the Benevolent Society was aided by a two-dollar membership fee, donations from the public, and an annual ball which the Society held until 1973.<sup>31</sup> These sources of revenue and some safe blue-chip investments in the stock market, allowed the Society to grow relatively prosperous. Using the annual reports and available financial records, it is possible to quantify the financial stability of this institution.

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<sup>30</sup> von Cardinal Papers, vol.1, file "German Benevolent Society Annual Reports", letter to M. Cohen-Stuart 27 February 1963.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. This information was gleaned from various Annual Reports of the Benevolent Society.

Table 4.2 -- Finances of the German Benevolent Society of Ottawa 1965-1973

<u>Year</u>	<u>Surplus</u>
1965	5409.99
1966	7312.28
1967	8095.65
1968	9312.21
1969	10,358.34
1970	13,321.05
1971	17,167.58
1972	20,203.71
1973	22,966.39

Source: Alliance of German-Speaking Organizations' Papers, file "German Benevolent Society" and von Cardinal Papers, vol.1, file "German-Benevolent Society Annual Reports".

From this ever-growing surplus, there was a revolving, interest-free loan-fund which dispersed financial assistance through the Society's Aid and Assistance Committee. The financial stability of this institution allowed it to be an active body which, as will be discussed later, was able to grow into new directions with respect to multicultural immigrant aid activities in the city.

The leadership in Ottawa's German community had economic and gender diversity. The incorporation of the Benevolent Society in 1963, provides a list of occupations held by the executive.<sup>32</sup> They were as follows; civil servant (2), contractor, secretary (2), technician, photographer, salesman, shipping clerk, farmer. The presence of three women among the ten member executive (both secretaries and the photographer), echoes the findings of other scholars with respect to the role of women in immigrant charitable activities.<sup>33</sup> It also shows that this humanitarian institution went beyond traditional socio-economic hierarchies, as was common in many earlier immigrant communities in North America.<sup>34</sup> While there was an absence of many German-Canadian professionals among the

<sup>32</sup>Alliance of German-Speaking Organizations' Papers, file "German Benevolent Society", Investiture of Incorporation 12 December 1963.

<sup>33</sup>Swyripa, Wedded to the Cause., pp.183-214.

<sup>34</sup>Bodnar, The Transplanted, pp.117-143.

leadership, their support certainly existed, in a less-formal and indirect manner.<sup>35</sup> This lack of socio-economic division within the Benevolent Society resulted, in part, from the new approach to organization that German Canadians adopted after World War II. Socio-economic diversity in the leadership of the Benevolent Society suggests that the sense of solidarity among German Canadians of varying classes was quite strong in Ottawa. This seems all the more probable in light of the fact that despite a multicultural membership by 1963, the executive was 100% German or German-Canadian.<sup>36</sup>

### **The Benevolent Society as a Charitable Institution:**

From this structural overview, it is best to move into the particularities of the Society. This institution was about people, agents of historical experience, and a discussion of their behaviour and words provides insight into their cultural identity as German Canadians. The importance of the discussion above was that it established the base from which particular action occurred. It shows that this institution was strong in terms of membership and finances and that its leadership represented several socio-economic sectors of the economy. As a result, the Benevolent Society provides a credible entry into the broader German-Canadian community, and especially the many immigrants and ethnics who comprised its membership.

Of the thousands of immigrants who came to Ottawa in the 1950s, one was to have an especially profound influence upon the community. Kurt von Cardinal left his post with the Trans-Canada Alliance of German Canadians in 1956 and joined the staff of the new embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany.<sup>37</sup> Soon after assuming his post as an agent

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<sup>35</sup>This can be seen in the nature of the businesses which congratulated the benevolent Society on its tenth anniversary; the list included lawyers, an automobile dealership owner, doctors, and a wide range of small business owners. *Der Nordwesten*, 16 February 1965, p.11. Also, cross-referencing membership lists of the Benevolent Society with other sources, such as the newspaper, shows that many German-Canadian professionals were due-paying members.

<sup>36</sup>The ten names listed on the 1963 investiture of incorporation were von Cardinal, Junginger, Danner, Elbert, Fischer (2), Baier, Dahlschen, Grunewald, and Brocksch.

<sup>37</sup>*Der Nordwesten* 16 February 1965.

for troubled immigrants and immigrant-related issues, von Cardinal joined the Benevolent Society and assumed its presidency in 1958. Under von Cardinal, the Benevolent Society made great in-roads with the German community of Ottawa and by several contemporaneous accounts, gave a tremendous amount of time and attention to needy immigrants and German Canadians.<sup>38</sup> In the late 1950s and 1960s, records show that aid took the form of cash grants, short-term interest-free loans, shelter, employment, and even in one case, the purchase of a new pair of rubber boots.<sup>39</sup> Some discussion of the type of charitable work done by the Benevolent Society reveals not only the inner dynamics of a particular ethnic community, but provides illustrative examples of the social climate of Canada during this time.

As was suggested earlier, even after the formation of government immigrant aid agencies and even as the new welfare state of Canada emerged, immigrants were still in need of assistance. In 1959, for example, some German immigrants on city relief still needed further aid.<sup>40</sup> In one case, it was for the purchase of subscription medication and in the other, it was to supplement the relief given to a young married couple. In yet another instance, aid was given to a woman whose husband had died and left her with seven children. In none of these cases were government-sponsored programs able to provide the necessary care. This problem was hardly restricted to the German immigrant community, as Ottawa citizens of a variety of ethnic backgrounds were not immune from insufficient government support.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> The tenth anniversary of the Benevolent Society (February 1965) was lauded with major articles in the two national German-language weeklies, Der Courier and Der Nordwesten, which included a congratulatory messages from a variety of businesses, Ottawa German clubs, and the German Ambassador.

<sup>39</sup> See von Cardinal Papers, vol.2, file "German Benevolent Society - Aid".

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., vol.1, file "German Benevolent Society: by-laws, outline of objectives"; untitled list.

<sup>41</sup> A major study in 1966-67, commissioned by the City of Ottawa, suggested a massive overhaul of the local social welfare system. It studied a variety of local programs and their impact upon people's well-being, and came to the conclusion that the poor, including immigrants, were not provided with sufficient aid and opportunity. See Social Planning Council of Ottawa and District, A Survey of the Needs and Resources for Community Supported Health, Welfare, and Recreation Services in Metropolitan Ottawa (City of Ottawa, 1967), esp. pp5-43.

A major problem with which the Benevolent Society was able to deal concerned the issue of spousal abuse. Immigrant women were particularly vulnerable in the postwar years, as gender roles were re-constructed from the "Old World" to a rapidly evolving "New World". This occasionally created confusion within the family unit with respect to issues of labour, child rearing, and, often, physical appearance. Yet immigrant families also suffered from the same types of exterior pressures as non-immigrant families and suffered from the same maladies. These included separation, divorce, infidelity, juvenile delinquency, as well as spousal and child abuse. Immigration historians are often reluctant to discuss these issues as they do not fit into patterns of success nor do they receive much attention in sources such as census records, church records, or oral testimony.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, the case of Trudi Hetzel<sup>43</sup>, is not the story of immigrant success.

Trudi Hetzel had married her second husband and brought with her a child from the first marriage. In 1964, she contacted the German Benevolent Society with a plea for help. Her husband repeatedly beat her and her child, primarily because the child was from another man. Hetzel was advised to contact Family Court and to immediately move out of her house. The Society then contacted a fellow German woman who owned a boarding house and made the arrangements, including paying for the rent, to have Trudi and her child move away from their abusive husband. In this instance, the insular world of the German-Canadian community provided aid and shelter from a social problem which was hardly unique to the German-Canadian community. Perhaps more so than any other case, this incident demonstrated what was so "average" about this community (the abuse of wife and child) and what was all-too-unique (the efficient aid of a community-based organization).

Indeed, this incident shows how universal some historical experiences may be. Sadly, it is issues of violence and despair which too often remind historians that a

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<sup>42</sup> Franca Iacovetta is a notable exception. See her "Making New Canadians."

<sup>43</sup> Due to the sensitive nature of this case and its modern period, the name Trudi Hetzel is a pseudonym to keep the family anonymous. See von Cardinal Papers, vol.2, file "German Benevolent Society -- Aid".

hyphenated status as a citizen was (and still is, as reflected in the horrible 1996 killings of a Sikh family in Vernon, British Columbia) not protection from human ills. The willingness of the Benevolent Society leadership to deal with this issue in an open manner, by referring the woman to a city aid agency, suggests that the German Canadians perceived themselves by the late 1960s as part of the greater community, at least with respect to social welfare, which surrounded them. In this example, the sense of isolation and otherness that was expressed in the founding charter of 1955, was replaced therefore by a sense of belonging.

The Benevolent Society's most common cases, however, dealt with the adjustment of new immigrants. Even though the number of cases dwindled during the 1960s, the Society was called upon by newcomers from 1955 right until the early 1970s. The best example of this sort of charitable work involved the case of a young man, a certified electrician, who came to Ottawa from Munich in 1969.<sup>44</sup> Hans was a young certified electrician who arrived in Ottawa with the hopes of applying his trade. After registering at local Manpower Services and describing his talents, Hans was provided with the opportunity for six months of free-language instruction and the handbook for certification for Ontario electricians. Hans was told that he had three months within which to write the qualifying exam, in English or French, to become certified to work as an electrician in Ontario. Not knowing much English or French, Hans failed his exam, only half-way through his English lessons.

The absurdity of training someone in English for six months but compelling him to write a detailed qualifying professional exam within three, was not lost on the Benevolent Society. The Society engaged the Ontario Ministry of Labour in a long, detailed six page letter and explained the unfair nature of this arrangement. The letter relied upon comments such as "traditional German skill" and "German industriousness" in an effort to exploit the stereotypical, in this case positive, impression Canadian society then held towards German

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<sup>44</sup>This paragraph is based upon a case from von Cardinal Papers, vol.2, file "German Benevolent Society - Aid"; letter to Ontario Ministry of Labour 19 September 1969.

Canadians. Yet the instance was so significant for the Benevolent Society and symptomatic, in their opinion, of the lack of informed opinion among government officials, that it also used the example of Hans when participating in a city-wide meeting of the Social Planning Council of Ottawa.<sup>45</sup>

These few examples serve to illustrate how the charitable aspects of the Benevolent Society responded to problems which were both common and extraordinary to the host society. The examples of supplemental aid to German Canadians already on city relief were reflective of the inadequacy of government policies. Although these policies were important beginnings, and this is sometimes overlooked in the historical literature on social welfare, community-based organizations played an at-times critical role in the preservation of individual and family dignity. As well, these cases reflect the genuine sense of charity and kinship which prevailed amongst some members of the Ottawa German-Canadian community. An editorial in the Ottawa German newspaper, Der Herold, reminded its readers that the early associations of German Canadians in Ottawa, such as the German Benevolent Society, "became a substitute for the family left behind."<sup>46</sup>

The charitable activities of the Benevolent Society which occurred throughout their existence can be read in two different and yet complimenting ways. They were first and foremost reflections of changes within their cultural landscapes, including the demographic (new immigrants), social (family instability) and economic (insufficient city relief) forces which impacted the community. Secondly, these activities reflected an expression of cultural identity in the guise of kinship. Acts of charity re-enforced a sense of commonality among community members, new and old, as well as demonstrated the evolving confidence of the community to deal with its host society from the core and not at the periphery. This was a sense not expressed in the 1955 charter.

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<sup>45</sup>von Cardinal Papers, vol.2, file "Correspondence: German Benevolent Society - Government Agencies and Local Welfare Organizations", handwritten report titled "Community Conference 17.1.70".

<sup>46</sup>Der Herold, 1 September 1973, "Editorial", p.2.

**Multiculturalism and the Evolution of the Benevolent Society:**

With improvements in the Ottawa economy, and the ability of German Canadians to find work quite easily, the Benevolent Society evolved from its roots as a German immigrant-aid organization to a voice for all immigrants, German or otherwise. This transition seems to have begun as early as 1961. In a letter written in January of 1961 to the editors of the Ottawa Citizen and Ottawa Journal, Kurt von Cardinal on behalf of the German Benevolent Society proposed a new immigrant aid agency for the city.<sup>47</sup> Demonstrating what was to become a new departure for the Benevolent Society and the entire German-Canadian community, the letter called for the establishment of a “Voluntary Local Immigrant Aid Agency embracing members of all ethnic groups” which would “turn ideals into realities”. In 1962, the Annual Report of the Benevolent Society announced that “as a member organization of the Ottawa Citizenship Council it is our aim to recognise no ethnical differences and to stand by all those who turn to us trustingly”.<sup>48</sup> The foray into multicultural concerns and using the language of multiculturalism, marked a definite shift in the mentalité of the Society and the Ottawa German-Canadian community. Gone by the early 1960s was the timid, selective inclusion of the original constitution of the Benevolent Society. Instead, there was a re-orientation of the Benevolent Society to issues beyond its ethnic boundaries.

This shift was in response to changes in the cultural landscape of the community. A large influx of new German immigrants after 1950 gave the Benevolent Society its *raison d'être*, and provided the base population upon which succeeding generations would add. However, reduced German immigration by the late 1950s gave cause for the German Benevolent Society to wonder what its role would be if immigration continued to dwindle. Furthermore, the economic success of postwar West Germany was providing Ottawa with

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<sup>47</sup> von Cardinal Papers, vol.2, file “German Benevolent Society Annual Ball”, letters dated January 1961.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.1, file “German Benevolent Society Annual Reports”.

far less impoverished German immigrants by the late 1950s. Economic success was also being enjoyed by the German Canadians in Ottawa and this, perhaps more than any other reason, had an important influence upon the Benevolent Society.

As demand decreased from German immigrants, the Society began to make inroads into the host Ottawa community. During the 1960s, the Society and Kurt von Cardinal became members of the Ottawa Welfare Council, the Ottawa Citizenship Council, and the Ottawa Social Planning Council. The letters cited above which called for a multi-ethnic immigrant aid society were not only a reaction to reduced German immigration and increasing so-called Third World immigrants, but it also reflected a change in thinking among German-Canadian community members.

For some within the community, this shift was a reflection of the Canadian society which surrounded them. One community member wrote:

“The Vereinsfamilien (literally, “association-families”) became bigger and bigger and harbour today a multitude of nationalities. Thus, some associations became a perfect mirror of the Canadian ethnic mosaic.”<sup>49</sup>

This quote says at least two important things about the shift to multiculturalism within the German community. First, members of the community considered their evolution a natural process, part of a larger ‘Canadian’ movement. This is further evidence for the suggestion that the move to multiculturalism was perceived as an action from the core of Canadian society and not from its periphery. As a result of this shift, the hopes for cultural “Deutschtum”, as expressed through the charter of the Trans-Canada Alliance, had new boundaries in Ottawa. These new boundaries included German Canadians and all those members of various nationalities who were interested in German culture.

The second point which can be taken from this quote is that the community’s sense of kinship, its solidarity, and its collective nature, were not threatened by the move to multiculturalism. The use of the term *Vereinsfamilien* is quite significant. Language, as

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<sup>49</sup> Der Herold, 1 September 1973, “Editorial”, p.2.

post-structuralists remind historians, is not a random phenomenon.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, words are part of a larger discourse, shaped in no small part by a group's identity. *Vereinsfamilien* not only contains an obvious reference to kinship, but it connects this reference with the socio-cultural institutional network which shaped it. As well, the word's inability to translate into workable English or French, remind the reader that there was a distinct nature to German-Canadian mentalité. For all its perception of a core group, this community did not lose sight of its cultural difference with the society which surrounded it. However, the ability of the community to synthesize these countering experiences did not cause them to "sunder" their minds, rather it provided them with a comforting point of reference within a new, strange home.

Multiculturalism did not stop with von Cardinal's letter to the Citizen and Journal nor with membership in multi-ethnic city-based councils. From 1961 until 1975, this institution took an active role in a range of multicultural activities. The 1965 annual report championed the Society's efforts in contributing to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism and the 1966 report cited membership of the Society on the Canada Welfare Council, Family Service Centre of Ottawa, as well as the Trans-Canada Alliance of German Canadians.<sup>51</sup> This sort of institutional integration reflected a deliberate and concentrated effort to promote multiculturalism not only within its own ethnic community, but also to the greater society. Clearly, the motivation for such action went beyond just humanist concerns for indigent immigrants. Multiculturalism was seen as a means benefiting the community, not just materially in the form of grants, but also politically as a recognition of their importance to Canadian society.

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<sup>50</sup> The literature dealing with this issue is massive, but often frustrating. For an accessible and intelligent discussion see Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob, "Postmodernism and the Crisis of Modernity" in Telling the Truth About History, ed. by Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob (New York: Norton, 1994), pp.198-240.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

The move to multiculturalism was also a direct response to the institution's desire to continue to play a role in the community. The 1967 annual report pointed out that the "...good situation in the labour market in 1967 made the placement of new arrivals not too difficult".<sup>52</sup> Indeed, by the late 1960s, German immigrants to Ottawa were firmly entrenched in the local economy as professionals, small business owners, and labourers. The arriving immigrants were skilled, rarely indigent, and fairly well informed as to the conditions into which they were migrating. Thus, as Jean Burnet and Howard Palmer have observed about benevolent societies all over Canada, this organization also expanded its mandate, in part, as a means of preserving its existence.<sup>53</sup> This expanded mandate can be seen vividly in the 1963 investiture of incorporation.

There were several key amendments to the original Society constitution as expressed in the 1963 investiture. The first was adding to the objectives of the Society, "to develop good citizenship and democratic ideals among Canadians of German ethnic origin and immigrants of German ethnic origin".<sup>54</sup> This was much more like the 1952 constitution of the Italian Immigrant Aid Society of Toronto and reflected the shift in the community's mentalité from the periphery of Canadian society to the core.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, the Society now intended to promote an understanding of "the Canadian way of life and Canadian customs, culture and language" and "to organize dances, films, and other theatrical performances". This cultural turn within the institution not only appealed to a broader segment of the community, but it also reflected the community's modified needs and desires as compared to 1955. Within eight years, therefore, the German Benevolent Society took on an institutional character much more indicative of the hopes expressed in charter of the Trans-Canada Alliance. To this end, the role of the President of the society, Kurt von

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.2, file "German Benevolent Society Circulars".

<sup>53</sup> Burnet and Palmer, *Coming Canadians.*, p.187.

<sup>54</sup> A copy of the investiture can be found in Alliance of German-Speaking Organizations' Papers, file "German Benevolent Society".

<sup>55</sup> See above, pp.7-8.

Cardinal, cannot be overlooked. His participation in the founding of the Alliance and his leadership of the Ottawa Benevolent Society helped this institution to broaden its mandate and to become an active agent within the greater Canadian society.

The shift through the 1960s to multicultural activities seemed complete by 1973. In responding to a questionnaire from the Ontario government in June of that year, the Society claimed to have “no restrictions on membership” and that it was “inter ethnic”.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, if the 1955 by-laws, the 1963 investiture, and the 1973 questionnaire are examined collectively, the multicultural move is quite clear. These three documents also demonstrate the evolving nature of the community’s charitable needs. In 1955 the perceived need was aid to the indigent. By the 1960s, this aid included support for social ills such as spousal abuse as well as the promotion of German culture and multicultural ideals. In the early 1970s, aid took the form of building a senior citizen’s home and fighting for German pensions owed from pre-migration labour in the homeland.<sup>57</sup>

The transformation in charitable activities paralleled a change in German-Canadian identities. This chapter has endeavoured to show these identities involved principally a perceived move from the periphery of the host society to the core. This was demonstrated, first, by the isolated, ‘Germans-only’ language of the 1955 by-laws, and the pan-German-Canadian cultural environment suggested by the Trans-Canada Alliance. Second, it was shown that the Society featured a structure of expanding membership and growing financial stability, and this stability helped facilitate a broadened multicultural mandate. It was also during this critical phase of its history, that the German Benevolent Society took the form of other post-1945 immigrant aid societies, such as that in Toronto’s Italian community. It was shown in the third section of the paper that the shift during the 1960s was fueled by

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<sup>56</sup> The original document can be found in Alliance of German-Speaking Organizations’ Papers, file “German Benevolent Society”.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2.

both changes in demand from the community as well as in the mentalité among the German Canadians to multicultural concerns and pursuits.

German-Canadian identities, as seen through the lens of this fraternal benefit organization, were marked by growing confidence. German Canadians reacted to the larger demographic, economic, and social issues which surrounded them by asserting itself as a voice within the core of the greater Ottawa society. This was facilitated by the concern of the host society that non-white immigrants from Asia, Latin America, and Africa, would upset the stability of Canadian society, along with the growing economic prosperity of German immigrants. Thus, the victimization and isolation of the postwar years was replaced by an odd mix of conservative progressiveness. Conservative, in that it hoped to preserve German culture and ideals, but progressive in the sense that it hoped to do so in an imagined, integrated, ethnic mosaic of Canadian society.

**Chapter Five: Defining the 'German' in 'German-Canadian' Citizenship:  
Cultural Relationships with History and Tradition, 1970-1975**

As the previous three chapters have demonstrated, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Germans in Ottawa were consistently reminded of their connections to Germany. Politically, the Third Reich and Nazi stereotypes were re-inforced by the mass media, television, and film. Culturally, leaders within the German-Canadian community sponsored a variety of events including dances, fests, lectures, concerts, and German language films.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the establishment of a variety of German small businesses, especially those in the food and service industry, provided a visible and easily accessible reminder of daily life in Germany. The product of all these elements was a significant amount of German public / social space within which the 'German' aspects of ethnic identities could be constructed. Indeed, for German Canadians in Ottawa, their pre-migration historical experiences played a critical role in the evolution of their identities after arriving in Canada.

Negotiating an ethnic identity did not, however, only evolve within a confined cultural space in response to outside social forces and perceptions. German-Canadian historical agents were clearly **influenced** by "discourse", "economics", or "politics", but their experiences were **not defined** by these powerful structures. Definition came from the behaviour and thinking of these 'average people' dealing with these extraordinary issues. In St. John's Lutheran Church, for example, German family strategies included the subsuming of visible ethnicity via the anglicization of names given to newborn children in

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<sup>1</sup> Beginning in 1968, there was a "German Week" which featured a concentrated menage of German cultural events. For an example of what this week looked like see the schedule of events in the Ottawa Herald, 1 October 1971.

response to perceived pressures in mass popular culture via German / Nazi stereotypes. These Germans were not the only immigrants to have these historical experiences. Kay Anderson's study of racial discourse in Vancouver's Chinatown<sup>2</sup> and Franca Iacovetta's examination of economic forces in Toronto's Italian community<sup>3</sup>, both shed valuable light on the interaction of external forces and internal everyday life. Yet is this interaction the total history of immigrant experience in Canada?

Stephen Kern has suggested that communities have, historically, developed cultures related to both "space" and "time".<sup>4</sup> For Kern, a culture of "time" is the perception and relationship a community has with its own past.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, while a community may view and assimilate its past in a variety of means, there are particular people, eras, issues, events, and movements, which remain fundamental. Whether this relationship is strong or weak, positive or negative, reflects important components of the community's mentalité. Often, traditions are invented within communities "to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past."<sup>6</sup> In this respect, a community's internal perception of itself and the landscapes which surround it, is influenced in no small way by the cultural relationships its members construct with their own past.

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<sup>2</sup> Kay Anderson, Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

<sup>3</sup> Franca Iacovetta, Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Kern, The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp.36-64.

<sup>6</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.1. This work is re-emerging as a major theoretical text for historians interested in culture. However, historians need to re-examine Hobsbawm's conceptualization of historical memory as selective. See footnote 50 below.

Immigration historians have long understood the importance of pre-migration history to the migration and post-migration experiences.<sup>7</sup> Iacovetta for one has gone to great lengths to show the connections of life in Italy with life in Canada.<sup>8</sup> Yet as Iacovetta operated from the now-traditional “transplanted” model of John Bodnar<sup>9</sup>, her focus was upon those elements of life in Italy which were re-produced in Toronto. This approach resulted in many important conclusions regarding the roles of gender and class, especially, in the history of Canada’s immigrants. Still, Iacovetta’s conclusions did not contribute to the large questions of how the Italians of Toronto defined themselves culturally as ‘Italian’ Canadians and how (or if) this definition affected their perceptions of their Canadian citizenship.

Thus far, this thesis has also not explicitly addressed this important component of German postwar experiences in Ottawa. Critical questions certainly remain as to the internal perceptions of the community. In part, these questions are related to the types of cultural relationships community members forged with their pasts. Two of these questions would include: “What was the community’s relationship with ‘German’ history?” and “What were ‘German’ traditions to the community?”. Answers to these questions provide insight into the community’s perceptions of citizenship, for both “history” and “traditions” have been perceived historically as obstacles to an immigrant’s social and political commitment.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Marcus Lee Hansen was the first to emphasize this element. See his The Atlantic Migration, 1607-1860 (New York, 1940).

<sup>8</sup> Iacovetta, Such Hardworking People, pp.3-19.

<sup>9</sup> John Bodnar, The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

<sup>10</sup> The historical relationship of “citizenship” and “identity” is discussed in Charles Tilly, “Citizenship, Identity and Social History,” International Review of Social History, vol. 40, supplement 3 (1995), pp.1-

While both questions were connected to the immigrants' perceptions of the past in their then-present and future, they dealt with unique issues. "History" for postwar Germans, especially those from the Third Reich, cast a political and cultural shadow in Canada that was inescapable. How the immigrants themselves perceived this history in their then-present day lives contributed to how they interpreted their relationship to Canada. Meanwhile, "traditions" held the mythical, cultural perception of the past for many of Ottawa's German immigrants.<sup>11</sup> As "history" dealt with "facts", traditions dealt in the aesthetic and spiritual. The perception of tradition by German immigrants reflected concerns and hopes for their ethnic identities. Together, however, history and tradition were parts of the community's relationships with their Canadian citizenship. For when declaring themselves as German Canadians, the community needed to define what the 'German' aspect of this label implied.

This chapter, therefore, examines the community's internal conception and construction of their 'German' past between the years 1970 and 1975 and how that manifested itself into a perception of their multicultural citizenship. It is considered here that the past was a cultural relationship that Germans in Ottawa experienced throughout their post-migration lives but which does not appear to have been publicly expressed until the early 1970s. Thus while the previous case studies were concerned most intensely with the 1950s and 1960s, the topics they explored were crucial to the community's ethnic

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17. In this chapter, "citizenship" is perceived as a process which incorporates political loyalty to a state. For a balanced and provocative review of how the politics of recognition have impacted the multiculturalism debate see Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in David Theo Goldberg, ed., Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), pp.75-104.

<sup>11</sup> "Myth" is used here to represent an imagined memory which is a real part of the individual's life. For a comprehensive review of the role of myths in historical study see Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson, eds., The Myths We Live By (New York: Routledge, 1990), pp.1-22.

identities in the early 1970s. In some ways, therefore, this chapter may be considered as a product of the historical experiences described by the previous two case studies as well as the first chapter which explored the structural character of the community.

The main source for material in this chapter is the Ottawa Herold.<sup>12</sup> This community newspaper featured strong editorial direction which expanded the parameters of the newspaper dramatically over the five years considered here.<sup>13</sup> Originally published as a newsletter for the Alliance of German-Speaking Organizations, the Herold's early issues were confined to reports of community events interspersed with advertisements from local German businesses, plus an occasional item of German-Canadiana or news from Germany. Interestingly, the founding charter of the Herold was explicit that the newspaper was to remain strictly non-secular and apolitical, much like every other socio-cultural organization in the community.<sup>14</sup>

Within twelve months, however, the Herold evolved into a monthly newspaper which carried editorials, news items, letters to the editor, plus reports of German community events.<sup>15</sup> The expanded mandate of the newspaper went along with an extended readership and by early 1973 the Herold's circulation reached 3000 per month.<sup>16</sup> Readers of the newspaper included residents of metropolitan Ottawa, western Quebec, Renfrew County, Perth, Prince Edward County, and even Montreal. As a result,

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<sup>12</sup> The Herold is part of the ethnic newspaper collection held at the National Library of Canada.

<sup>13</sup> The newspaper itself recognized its public transformation as it began its fifth year of publication. See Ottawa Herold, 1 January 1974.

<sup>14</sup> A copy of the charter, plus the various drafts and revisions which went into it, can be found in the National Archives of Canada (NAC), MG 28, V98 (hereafter Alliance Papers), file, "Ottawa Herold".

<sup>15</sup> This transition was not without its opponents and one of the most intense debates which occurred in the Ottawa Herold, and will be discussed below, concerned the newspaper's function as a community institution.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. Minutes of meetings held by the Alliance discussed the Herold's circulation and distribution.

distribution of the newspaper required direct mailing as well as being available through various businesses and socio-cultural institutions within Ottawa. Originally, the Herold was free of charge as costs were covered by advertising, but as a result of mailing expenses and an increase in printing charges, by 1971 nominal subscription rates were introduced.<sup>17</sup>

The Herold represented in many respects, therefore, the most democratic of all of the German community's socio-cultural institutions. It had a large 'membership', it included people who were both active and non-active members of other community functions, and its institutional boundaries did not preclude participation in the community because of geography. For the researcher, these qualities present another window into Ottawa's German community and unlike St. John's Lutheran Church and the German Benevolent Society, the Herold presents a unique opportunity to study debate and dissension within the community. As has been said earlier, internal debate represented ethnic identities in flux, unique from one another but displaying a particular "cultural" similarity. This chapter approaches these debates without passing judgments as to 'right' and 'wrong' but instead by looking at the issues over which disagreement arose. Indeed, it is these fulcrums of arguments which hold for the historian the most valuable material to extract and examine. In an institution as open as a community newspaper, this material is often abundant.

As a historical source, newspapers are often invaluable. Treated as data, newspapers provide figures, names, dates, places, and editorial opinion. In this respect,

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid. Also, by 1975, the Herold announced that subscription rates were two dollars per year. The subscription was only to cover mailing and publishing expenses that superseded advertising income.

newspapers are virtually unmatched by any other 'modern' historical source and carry a distinct similarity for historians of the modern era to court scribes for medieval historians. However, the accuracy newspapers present (and represent) as a historical source may be problematic<sup>18</sup> When newspapers are considered as sources for data, therefore, the information taken from them may require confirmation through linkage to other sources. Another potential hazard is that newspapers sometimes carried ideological bias that determined the shape of stories and how "facts" were interpreted. Thus along with accuracy, interpretation may present problems for the historian treating newspapers as a "primary" source. However, these problematics need not, and do not, paralyze the historian from working with newspapers. Being informed about the limits of newspapers does, however, contribute to a better understanding of the material taken from them.

If a newspaper is considered as a cultural artifact, however, then the analysis of its contents take on a different shape than that described above.<sup>19</sup> Post-structural analysis of texts is, by now, nothing new in historical research. Seeing language (or "discourse") as a signifier of meaning suggests that word choice and "silences" become symbolic of something greater than the historicized meaning of a particular word(s). Even the physical structure of a newspaper, such as what articles are on the first page as opposed to the second, what photographs are published / not published, what stories are absent / present,

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<sup>18</sup> See the arguments in Roberto Franzosi, "The Press as a Source of Socio-Historical Data: Issues in the Methodology of Data Collection from Newspapers," *Historical Methods*, vol.20 (1987), pp.5-16.

<sup>19</sup> This second approach to newspapers is touched upon in Catherine L. Covert, "'Jumbled, Disparate, and Trivial': Problems in the Use of Newspapers as Historical Evidence," *The Maryland Historian*, vol.12 (1981), pp.47-60.

and so forth, hold symbolic meaning.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the categorization of stories as “national news”, “local news”, “entertainment”, and so forth, reveals conceptions of society held by not only the newspaper editors but also the readership.<sup>21</sup> Thus, from the post-structuralist perspective, newspapers become an even more powerful marker of historical experience.

This chapter adopts ideas from both approaches. The data conveyed in the Ottawa Herald as selected by this chapter is based largely upon editorials and letters to the editor. As a result, the ‘facts’ are secondary to the issues which are being debated. The chances that both the editors and the readers were participating in a hoax of some sort is quite remote. As well, the manner in which the newspaper transformed itself from its apolitical roots suggests that the newspaper also be treated as an institutional artifact. Indeed, as a socio-cultural institution, the Herald held an identity and its evolution, like that of community members, produced and reproduced numerous cultural symbols. These symbols were the questions / debates outlined above and to which this chapter now turns.

### **Germany’s History in the “New” World:**

Within the pages of the Ottawa Herald, Germany’s history was often a source of celebration and an opportunity to pay homage. Johannes Kepler<sup>22</sup> and Nicolaus

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<sup>20</sup> An outstanding example of the potential for this sort of analysis can be found in Brent Peterson, Popular Narratives and Ethnic Identity: Literature and Community in *Die Abendschule* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

<sup>21</sup> This idea is developed in Robert D. Hume, “Texts Within Contexts: Notes Towards a Historical Method,” Philological Quarterly, vol.72 (1992), esp. pp.82-85.

<sup>22</sup> “Astronauten des Geistes”, Ottawa Herald, 1 February 1972 .

Copernicus<sup>23</sup>, literary figures such as Thomas Mann and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe<sup>24</sup> and composers Franz Schubert<sup>25</sup> and Johann Strauss<sup>26</sup>, were all featured as German historical heroes. Medieval and early modern German history (i.e. 1000-1900) also supplied political notables to whom Herold readers were (re)introduced.<sup>27</sup> Each of these figures symbolized what was 'right' about Germany's history. Kepler and Copernicus stood for German scientific achievement which benefited world history. Mann and Goethe, Schubert and Strauss, were each icons of the German 'kulturation'<sup>28</sup> whose work inspired peoples from all countries, and "great" German families such as the Eichendorffs and notable women like Luise von Preussen symbolized the triumph of the liberated individual in Germany's history. In the pages of a newspaper as culture-oriented as the Herold, such coverage would have been expected. In the early 1970s, furthermore, each of these figures were considered by the Herold's editors as positive role models for German Canadians. Letters to the editor and minutes of meetings held to discuss the editorial direction of the Herold both suggest that many in the community shared the opinions of the editors.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, for the community, this represented 'German' history as

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<sup>23</sup> The coverage of Copernicus was especially interesting as Copernicus was an East Prussian who has been 'claimed' by both Poles and Germans. See "1973 ist Copernicus Jahr," Ottawa Herold, 1 March 1973; Ottawa Herold, 1 February 1974; and Ottawa Herold, 1 May 1974.

<sup>24</sup> For the importance of these and other writers see the article on Professor Katharina Mommsen in Ottawa Herold, 1 October 1973.

<sup>25</sup> "Franz Peter Schubert", Ottawa Herold, 1 August 1972. Austrians like Strauss were considered German historical figures.

<sup>26</sup> The 150th birthday of Strauss was a major celebration in Ottawa. See Ottawa Herold, 1 October 1975.

<sup>27</sup> For example see "Koenigin Luise von Preussen," Ottawa Herold, 1 June 1973; "Die Muehle im 'kuehlen Grunde': Zwanzig Jahre Eichendorff-Museum," Ottawa Herold, 1 August 1974; and "Annette von Droste-Huelshoff," Ottawa Herold, 1 May 1975.

<sup>28</sup> The term 'kulturation' (literally "culture nation") refers to the mythological and romantic conception of Germany's "high" culture.

<sup>29</sup> See the minutes of meetings held in September and November of 1974 of the Herold's board of directors. NAC, Alliance Papers, file, "Ottawa Herold".

they remembered it, or at least as they chose to remember, and how it should be presented to their children.<sup>30</sup>

Romantic images of Germany's history, such as those of Kepler and Copernicus, gave Germans in Ottawa an opportunity to revel in their ethnic heritage rather than shrink from it. As was discussed in the study of St. John's Lutheran Church, during the 1950s and 1960s, the images of Germany's history which community members saw were hardly desirable.<sup>31</sup> Books, films, news stories, and public school history classes emphasized the 1933-1945 era of German history and the brutality which it unleashed. The appeal to what was seen as a more glorious and truly representative era of Germany's history by the Herold, was in part a reaction to the negative moments emphasized by others.

However, there was also a significant internal element which motivated such a romantic presentation of Germany's history. Having an extensive readership, the Herold was in a valuable position to influence historical memory. As well, the Herold was founded by community leaders who had recently re-organized the community into the "Alliance of German-Speaking Organizations" in an effort to strengthen the bonds keeping German Canadians, in and around Ottawa, together.<sup>32</sup> Thus, when deliberately fostering a distinct image of German history, the newspaper was able to involve itself with the process of "community building".<sup>33</sup> Kepler, Copernicus, Mann, and the rest, were presented as

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<sup>30</sup> See the article "Deutsche Geschichte als Lehrfach der deutschen Sprachschule in Kanada" ("German History as a Subject in German Language Schools in Canada") in Ottawa Herold, 1 November 1974.

<sup>31</sup> See Chapter Two.

<sup>32</sup> The preface to the Herold's charter makes this point very clearly. NAC, Alliance Papers, file "Ottawa Herold".

<sup>33</sup> "Community building" was evident in a number of articles that the Herold featured including one which analyzed what the community's young women were reading. See "Was Junge Maedchen heute lesen: Ideale von vorgestern stehen in der Buchern," Ottawa Herold, 1 September 1974.

heroes and special sources of pride and dignity for the German-Canadian community. These figures, it was hoped, would provide common points around which the diverse and dispersed population of the Ottawa community could rally. From this, community leaders hoped that they could foster the growth of a cultural relationship with the immigrant's past. The letters to the editor which enthusiastically thanked the newspaper for such features, and the absence of letters of protest against them, suggest that the editors of the Herold were somewhat successful.

For all these efforts, though, Ottawa's "Reichsdeutsche" German immigrants could not avoid the legacy of a national history which had produced two devastating world wars in thirty years. In the summer of 1973, readers of the Herold had a new sort of historical memory presented to them, one that was far from the glorious nature of Goethe's prose or Copernicus's astrological explorations. Beginning with an editorial entitled "Hitler - Fruehling" and culminating in an impassioned denouncement by a major organization within the community, Ottawa's German Canadians engaged the Third Reich not in direct confrontation with the external society but among its own members. Indeed, by providing a German public / social space, the Herold was a forum within which this past could be addressed in a stronger manner than had it occurred in, for example, the Ottawa Citizen.

Still, for all the passion which this debate featured and its public nature, the overwhelming majority of Ottawa's Germans confronted this history in their own minds and hearts. As a result, their private experiences in reflecting on World War II, especially, remain for the most part hidden from researchers. Is it possible then to consider the

“Hitler-Fruehling” debate in the Herold as a significant element in the community’s historical memory?

Walter Abish’s outstanding novel, How German is it: Wie Deutsch ist es, gives reason to think that the “Hitler-Fruehling” debate was critical to the immigrants’ historical memories. In this book, the protagonist Ulrich Hargenau returns to modern (1979) West Germany to re-discover what Germany’s history of the 1914-1945 era means to the word “German”.<sup>34</sup> In re-entering his homeland, the border guards do not question Hargenau as to why he is returning. As the narrator explains, returning German nationals, “come to peer into their past...to rediscover their German roots”<sup>35</sup> and that border guards have no reason, nor desire, to question them as to why. By the end of the novel, Hargenau’s journey of self-exploration leads him to conclude that the political aspects of 1914-1945 Germany lie, for the most part, repressed both in its citizenship and the state. However, Hargenau sees ‘former’ Germans (i.e. emigrants like himself) as having used their time away from Germany to come to at least a personal understanding.

In June of 1973, readers of the Herold saw how another German emigrant had reflected on German contemporary history. In a reaction to an article in Newsweek on a re-birth of international interest in the Hitler phenomenon, including new books, films, and plays, the chief editor of the Herold wrote that:

“Hitler was neither the first head of state who had one foot in the grotesque nor the first who lost a war. But what was once called war propaganda is now a billion dollar business, which we should not give up

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<sup>34</sup> Walter Abish, How German is it: Wie Deutsch ist es (New York: New Directions Books, 1979). This novel (it won the PEN / Faulkner Prize in 1980) journeys into the mysteries and realities of German historical experience through the experiences of a character whose literary talents (he is a novelist of high regard) remain for him secondary to the nature of his father’s participation in the Resistance and his ex-wife’s Marxist terrorist activities during the 1960s and early 1970s. As such, this novel is actually one of the best socio-political histories of postwar West Germany.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p.2.

because of respect for objectivity. And it is well possible to do this to the Germans; they do not break windows; they do not go on protest walks; they do not blow up pipelines; they are only embarrassed. That is all.

Perhaps the German film industry is simply afraid. What about a movie about Morgenthau's philosophy; about American concentration camps; about the dictator Stalin; about the topic 'the English grew fat withholding potatoes from the Irish' or 'how to build an Empire selling slaves to America'.

This is not our way to do it - and we need not do it that way. We have assumed our share of responsibility of historical developments and we will see how others will deal with the power of destiny. Judging from an economic and political viewpoint, this destiny is already emerging mightily."<sup>36</sup>

For the editor, 'German' held particular meaning when reflecting on German history. For example, in alluding to the German / Nazi stereotypes in American and British films as "war propaganda" and then the silence of Germans in responding to such propaganda, 'German' was equated with 'embarrassment' and 'fear'. However, when explaining that a 'cultural war' (in this case via German-made films of other countries' histories) was not "our way", the editor restored elements of strength ("power of destiny") and purpose ("already emerging mightily").<sup>37</sup> These conflicting images, especially "embarrassment / power" and "fear / destiny", reflected the deep ambivalence Germans all over the world felt about Germany's actions in World War II. Many Germans were embarrassed by their history and by the economic and political power they quickly regained in Europe. Others feared the element of destiny (the Sonderweg) which was taught to them as children

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<sup>36</sup> Ottawa Herald, 1 June 1973. I am indebted to Barbara Lorenzkowski who helped in the translation of this very difficult document. The editor who wrote this piece (and others) employed a style that reflected his twenty years away from Germany.

<sup>37</sup> This sentence does not, however, reflect an editorial written by the same author a month earlier. See "The war that made us what we are today" in Ottawa Herald, 1 May 1973. In this piece, the editor illustrates bitterly the exploitation of aboriginal peoples by American governments.

studying German history in school.<sup>38</sup> German immigrants in Ottawa were not immune from this ambivalence and it reflected in the responses this article received.

The most impassioned response to the editorial above came from a major socio-cultural institution in the Ottawa German-Canadian community. The Maple Leaf Almrausch Club wrote:

“It is...our duty to bring to your attention our displeasure with an article called “Hitler-Fruehling”...In this article the writer expresses a number of political thoughts and sentiments which have no place in a mouth-piece of social clubs. Our club...feel(s) that politics are detrimental not only to our cause but also the other member clubs and churches under the AGSO. (Alliance of German-Speaking Organizations) For this reason we strongly protest such undiplomatic news writing as was given in the “Hitler-Fruehling” article.

In the past 20 years we Germans have reached a respectable social position in this great new country of ours, and we are not willing to have the tolerance of its population tested unnecessarily by irresponsible writing.

If certain people feel that politics is their game, let them create their own political party or work through their members of Parliament but definitely not through the Stadtausschuss.

We in the Maple Leaf Almrausch Club take a dim view of this situation and would remove our organization from the AGSO if this type of news reporting is continued in the future.”<sup>39</sup>

Interestingly, this letter to the editor was written in English while the original editorial appeared in German. This in itself reflected the degree to which the Maple Leaf Almrausch Club felt Germans in Ottawa should use the language(s) of their “great new country”. As well, this reply made it clear what ‘German’ should and should not mean. ‘German’, the club felt, should not be political unless it was done so from within the

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<sup>38</sup> Sonderweg means, literally, “special way” and it was / is used to define the role of destiny in Germany’s history. Not surprisingly, this is a bitterly contested concept in German history. The best discussion of the debate is Jurgen Kocka, “German History Before Hitler,” Journal of Contemporary History, vol.23 (1988), pp.3-16. The idea of destiny was a fixture, however, in the daily life of Germans under the Third Reich. For discussions of Germany’s social history between 1933 and 1945 see David F. Crew, ed., Nazism and German Society 1933-1945 (New York: Routledge, 1994).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 1 September 1973.

'Canadian' government. As a result, the club was furious that the Herold's pages should feature a political article. Furthermore, the club considered that the absence of 'German' as a politically active word had, apparently, been a prime reason German immigrants "reached a respectable social position" in Canada. Similarly, unlike the bravado expressed in the original editorial, this reply by the Maple Leaf Almrausch Club decried such an attitude as against the concerns and needs of the Ottawa German community. Indeed, while "strength" was an important element of the editorial, this letter considered such a quality to be counter-productive to German-Canadian life. Such a conflict of opinion within the German-Canadian community clearly reflected the paradox of Germany's history, which (like all states) has featured both the brilliant and the abhorrent.

As this letter to the editor reacted to an article which was overtly historical in subject, it is quite likely that the club equated 'politics' with 'history'. However, the editorial clearly connects 'culture' with this 'history'. When conceiving of history in such different ways, community members, in part, also held a different relationship with that history. For those like the editor who *see* history as a cultural component, 'German' history was intrinsic to their perception of themselves as 'German' Canadians. However, for those who saw history as something as disconnected from everyday life as international politics, then 'German' history became secondary to the negotiation of their ethnic identities.

These contrasting attitudes also reflected a difference in the conception of time. For the former 'history is culture' group, the past was indelibly rooted in the present and the future. For the 'history is politics' people, the future remained to be made from

material of the present. This difference had important ramifications on the ethno-cultural identities of each of these groups of people. Those who saw their history as unrelated to their present and future were not unlike those German nationals observed by Ulrich Hargenau. While it is unfair to judge these Germans of Ottawa as having repressed their history, they did deny its relevance for their own identity as new Canadian citizens. Conversely, the editor who wrote the opinion piece saw his citizenship as incorporating his history as a German national prior to 1945. Migration had given the editor spatial and political distance from Germany, but it had not provided a cultural disconnection. Thus, “history” for German Canadians of Ottawa was a combination of conflicting images and emotions. This confusion was significant to Canadian history, however, because it affected the adjustment and identification these immigrants experienced with Canadian society.

### **The Christmas Tradition and German-Canadian Identity:**

Traditions have been at the cornerstone of the immigrant’s cultural experience. By definition, traditions were regular practices of faith, remembrance, and celebration. Often romanticized in folklore and oral traditions, cultural traditions defined for many the role of the past in the construction of the present.<sup>40</sup> Traditions were also highly symbolic to immigrants’ relationships with both the “new” and “old”. Whether imported (“transplanted”) or invented, cultural traditions were often perceived as mythical bridges

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<sup>40</sup> For example, a German immigrant castigated his fellow immigrants for not supporting German functions in Ottawa. He told them that “many of us have beautiful memories of advent in our childhood. How many have passed on this beautiful tradition to our children?”. Ottawa Herald, 7 January, 1971.

to a life left behind. Indeed, traditions (like “history” and “citizenship”) were crucial to an internal perception of ethnic identity.

Traditions could be both very personal and highly public. For the immigrant, a tradition needed to be a shared experience whether with an imaginary “old world” or with elements in the “new world”. As such, it bred a degree of “community” feeling among those individuals who participated in the ritual.<sup>41</sup> However, the impact of a tradition was most dramatic upon the individual immigrant’s vision of ethno-cultural identity. As a result, immigrant cultural traditions transcended the public and private spheres of historical experience.

Consider, for example, the following quote from the President of the “Concordia Male Chorus” of Ottawa’s German-Canadian community. It captures the importance of tradition (in this case music) in both the personal and public elements of German-Canadian ethnic identity:

Music is power. It influences our minds, our nerves, our feelings and our souls....It is music as well that transmits the ideals and ideas of a community long past to the community now living from whence it shall go to a community soon to be born. In a word: Music is deemed universally important, because it helps mankind to love and to remember.<sup>42</sup>

This quote demonstrates vividly the mythical power of tradition to provide a connection to the past. It also reflects the idea that traditions were understood by historical agents to hold symbolic meaning beyond a the personal and individual level. Put another way,

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<sup>41</sup> Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions.”, p.9.

<sup>42</sup> This quote was taken from reflections on the 20th anniversary of the chorus in Ottawa published in Wir und Andere Ueber Uns (Ottawa, 1978), p.2. This and other related materials can be found in NAC, MG 28, V104, vol.4, file “Concordia Ottawa - Anniversary Booklet, 1978”.

traditions bred a culture of the past and fostered the development of a community. In their own way, each contributed to the construction of personal and community identities.

The case of the Ottawa German Canadians and Christmas ("Weihnacht") provides a useful glimpse into the role tradition played in the negotiation of ethnic identities. From 1970 to 1975, the December and January editions of the Herold were full of reports of Christmas traditions and events<sup>43</sup>, poetry and short stories<sup>44</sup>, and often commentary on the 'German' nature of the community's Christmas celebrations.<sup>45</sup> The most poignant commentary appeared in January 1974 under the simple title, "Ende Deutscher Weihnacht?" ("End of the German Christmas?"). It was an article which deserves to be quoted at length:

These [Christmas] celebrations in the club families ("Vereinsfamilien") became a substitute for the family circles at home in the homeland. Quite naturally, for us Germans, this family celebration was the time of the year when comparisons between old and new homeland were decided in favour of the old one. Christmas in the "Heimat" always had, particularly in bad times, a somewhat magic quality. ... It was the one celebration of the year, when the inner values of men received attention. If this overall visible good spirit had been applied on the remaining 364 days of the year, the world would have been guaranteed ideal freedom... We Germans, who nature has endowed with emotional rather than rational gifts, celebrated Christmas as a personal touching celebration, ...[However] our ties with the homeland became looser and looser. Customs ... changed and adopted.

Motivated by the love of the old homeland, the allegiance to the new one, and also the interest in us and our children we should preserve our good customs .. and try to get rid of only our ... bad customs. ...Some German communities have already totally acclimatized themselves. The "German" of their Christmas celebrations is written so small that it is no longer visible. Neither Christmas trees nor Christmas decorations; instead Santa Claus and much Ho-Ho. ...We

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<sup>43</sup> For example see "Die Wiedergeburt des Lichtes," Ottawa Herold, 01 December 1971; "Die Weihnachtsgeschichte," Ottawa Herold, 1 December 1973.

<sup>44</sup> "Deutsche Weihnacht," Ottawa Herold, 1 December 1974; "Advent," Ottawa Herold, 1 December 1975.

<sup>45</sup> For example see "Weihnacht - gibt es das heute noch?" Ottawa Herold, 1 December 1975.

have forgotten to cultivate those customs, which address the remaining human values in us and which rend us, if maybe only for a short time, more lovable.<sup>46</sup>

The connection between “Christmas”, “family”, “Vereinsfamilien”, and “homeland” in the very first sentence of the excerpt reflected how a tradition formed a bridge to the country of birth. For in the imagery of this sentence there was a romantic connection between the functional elements of Christmas and the spiritual. Celebrations at the “Vereinsfamilien” represented the functional, while “family circles” and “homeland” fulfilled the spiritual component of Christmas for this German immigrant.

In linking the connection back to Germany, the author reminded his fellow Germans that Christmas held a “magical quality”, which was even more pronounced during the “bad times”. In acknowledging the “bad times”, the author restored some of the realism which connected the Christmas tradition to everyday life for these German immigrants. These “bad times” were probably the 1939 to 1950 period when the war and then the postwar devastation presented a bleak physical and spiritual landscape for daily life in Germany.

Simon Schama’s recent study of Germany’s romantic connection to natural landscapes<sup>47</sup> demonstrates how Germans after 1945 looked at romantic imagery and tradition contrasted against historic German militarism as a source of great angst. For example, what was so cherished and beloved in the natural landscape (especially the forest) could not be assimilated with the ugly and bizarre reality that the Third Reich

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<sup>46</sup> Ottawa Herald, 1 January 1974. All quotations in the following discussion come from this excerpt unless otherwise noted.

<sup>47</sup> Simon Schama, Memory and Landscape (Bath: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995).

displayed a great deal of ecological consciousness.<sup>48</sup> Despite this and the imperial presence of American, British, and Soviet occupiers, however, the use of romantic imagery remained in the daily private lives of Germans, despite its absence in the public.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, German men and women manipulated romantic images needed to foster a sense of hope during the postwar “bad times”.

Ottawa’s postwar German immigrants did not abandon such a practice when they migrated to Canada. Yet, the processes of migration and adjustment impacted how imagery was used within the community. Instead of using tradition and images to foster hope for the future, in 1974 the author of “Ende Deutsche Weihnacht?” used them to stimulate memory. In both Schama’s study and in this example, the use of literary imagery was not only predicated on what was “real” in the author’s life, but on how it was remembered. Traditions, therefore, were sometimes an intricate part of an immigrant’s memory.

The author of “Ende Deutsche Weihnacht?” also defined what was ‘German’ about the Christmas tradition, his worries over its change, and, by extension, how that reflected elements in the ‘German’ Canadian character. A ‘German’ Christmas was said to provoke great introspection as “it was the one celebration of the year, when the inner values of men and women received attention”. The author also suggests that a ‘German’ Christmas is needed by the ‘German’ spirit which “nature has endowed with emotional rather than rational gifts”. Thus, more than a cultural requirement, a German Christmas was a spiritual and philosophical need for German immigrants.

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>49</sup> For a concise discussion on cultural life in the American zone of occupation see Ralph Willett, The Americanization of Germany, 1945-1949 (New York: Routledge, 1989).

It is not surprising then that the author worries that because “some German communities have already totally acclimated themselves” the “German” in their Christmas is almost vanished. The author tells the readers that they have “forgotten” not only how to celebrate but, more importantly, why it is significant for German Canadians to celebrate in the ‘German’ Christmas tradition. However, the author also represents the integrated thinking of postwar German-Canadian immigrants in Ottawa. He points out that only “good” customs should be retained and the “bad” eliminated not only for the betterment of themselves but so, too, for their children.

Rather than importing the German Christmas tradition en masse or adopting a ‘Canadian’ celebration (“Santa Claus and much Ho-Ho”), then, the author calls for Christmas’s re-invention<sup>50</sup> as a ‘German-Canadian’ tradition. This did not equate, however, with a Christmas tradition that was a menage of ‘Canadian’ and ‘German’ pieces. Rather, it was a call to fuse and intertwine the spiritual aspects of a ‘German’ tradition with the cultural landscapes of Canada. Clearly, this process would be different for various individuals, families, and communities depending on the local conditions in their cultural landscapes. This suggestion, while consistent with the evolution of German traditions in other historical moments (such as that described so well by Kathleen Neils

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<sup>50</sup> When dealing with migrants, the term “re-invention” accommodates the relationship between the “old” and “new” homes of the people connected with a particular tradition. It also restores the fluid nature of traditions over time rather than conceiving of them as “transplanted” patches in a cultural quilt. As such, the term “re-invention” differs somewhat from Hobsbawm’s contention that traditions can be “invented” using pieces of an older tradition. Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions”, p.6.

Conzen in nineteenth century German America<sup>51</sup>), did not necessarily reflect a consensus within the Ottawa community.

In 1974, the Concordia Male Chorus held its annual childrens' Christmas Party at which children sang and celebrated the coming of Christmas, albeit in a non-denominational atmosphere. Yet in an article which discussed the Christmas party, a community member expressed frustration and disappointment that the party had featured announcements in English, had used a "Canadian" Santa Claus, and did not sing many traditional German-language songs.<sup>52</sup> In responding to this article, the leader of the Concordia Male Chorus argued that, "we (the community) must realize that our children are Canadian-born and many of our members and friends are also Canadians and therefore, a truly German Christmas spirit is, in my opinion, not the overriding concern".<sup>53</sup>

This debate revealed fundamental concerns about the process of importing traditions, as opposed to re-inventing them. The community member who disliked the Concordia party believed that, unlike the author of "Ende Deutsche Weihnacht?", 'German' traditions were no longer 'German' once they were adjusted to reflect the non-German cultural landscape. Ironically, the leader of the Concordia chorus did not disagree with this assumption; he admitted that the party was not in "a truly German Christmas spirit". However, the Concordia leader attributed this to the conditions of the cultural landscape which were featured at the party. Still, however, neither side of this debate considered the

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<sup>51</sup> Kathleen Neils Conzen, "Ethnicity as Festive Culture: Nineteenth-Century German America on Parade," in Werner Sollors, ed., The Invention of Ethnicity (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp.44-76.

<sup>52</sup> Ottawa Herald, 1 January 1975.

<sup>53</sup> Ottawa Herald, 1 February 1975. The author of the original article responded to this letter by apologizing for having given the impression that the party was a negative experience. Ottawa Herald, 03 April 1975.

re-invention of these 'German' traditions. One bemoaned their absence and the other argued they were inappropriate given the conditions. In this respect, both the Concordia leader and the disgruntled community member differed quite significantly from the arguments in "Ende Deutsche Weihnacht?". Therefore, it would be inaccurate to describe the Germans of Ottawa as having shared a common philosophy regarding the Christmas tradition during the early 1970s. It can be said, however, that German Christmas traditions were important to many community members and reflected competing conceptions of their German-Canadian ethnic identities.

When cultural traditions of immigrant groups are understood as constructions and re-inventions based on the "old" and "new" worlds, they become symbols of ethnic identities evolving. In Ottawa, the 'German' Christmas practices equated with a concern over German-Canadian ethnic identity in Canada. The author of "Ende Deutsche Weihnacht?" recognized that this identity required a transformation from "German and / or Canadian" to "German-Canadian". Importantly, such an understanding had not yet developed in the debate over the Concordia Christmas party. The shift in understanding traditions as complex (German-Canadian) as opposed to either / or (German and / or Canadian), also had critical implications on the conception of 'German-Canadian' citizenship.

### **History and Tradition as Political and Cultural Citizenship**

The discussions above on "history" and "tradition" both point towards the community's perceptions of "citizenship". As immigrants, Ottawa's Germans were faced

with the prospect of integrating their ethno-cultural identities with political membership in Canadian citizenry. The editorials and debates over German history and German Christmas traditions reflected the dilemma which accompanied, because of migration, the fusion of cultural and political criteria.

The dilemma stemmed, in part, from the immigrants' conflicting perceptions over "citizenship". Did "citizenship" belong in a political discourse? Was it an element in cultural discourse? Could it exist simultaneously? The Germans of Ottawa thought about these questions long and hard. This thought manifested itself in the conflicting ideas about the cultural relationship with the Nazi past and the possibility of re-inventing traditions. Fortunately, it also produced an explicit statement on German-Canadian citizenship..

In June of 1972, the Ontario Government held the "Heritage Ontario Congress" to examine ethnicity and multiculturalism in the province. Soliciting opinions from ethnic communities as well as traditional government bodies, the Congress provided a forum for the Ottawa German-Canadian community to voice its "collective"<sup>54</sup> opinion on these issues. In their submission to the Congress, the German community of Ottawa explicitly tried to resolve how history and tradition produced a single definition of citizenship. They said that:

**"This community is comprised of people with the greatest diversity of origin of perhaps any of the ethnic groups...(and) the common bond of the members of this community is the German culture and the German language as well as their aspirations to be citizens of Ottawa, Ontario and Canada....The hope for the future is to remain an identifiable, vital and potent, but integrated component of this multicultural society -- Canada.**

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<sup>54</sup> This opinion was actually the product of a small group of German Canadians in Ottawa, but who published their submission in the Herold and received only positive letters of support from readers.

...Indeed we believe that cultural pluralism is the very essence of the Canadian identity. Every ethnic group has the right to preserve and develop its own culture and values within the Canadian context."<sup>55</sup>

This passage demonstrates that the Germans of Ottawa felt that both history / politics and tradition / culture had a role in the construction of citizenship. Even more significantly, however, was that the German community did not see one more important than the other. In their own community, culture / tradition unified in spite of differences in politics / history. Yet, federally, they argued, politics / history could unite in spite of differences in culture / tradition. By adopting such a stance, the Germans of Ottawa did not isolate culture and politics into separate spheres of life and therefore separate and competing discourses of citizenship.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, the Germans of Ottawa saw politics and culture as complimentary issues in resolving the question of their "Canadian" identities.

Politics and culture also converged in another issue related to citizenship and that was the role of the state in the life course of its multicultural citizens. Using a blend of "eco-philosophy" and holistic spirituality, the Germans of Ottawa argued that:

In an age where we get increasingly used to see (sic) things in their totality ("Ganzheit"), the complicated interrelationships and interdependencies of life and the relationship between man and his environment make us suddenly realize what our good economy is doing to nature. In this age where we are aware of ecology, we can no longer accept the view that multiculturalism is only 'ethnic events', education or language. It is more. It must mean the development of cultural minorities in all their facets. It should embrace the whole life span of the ethno-cultural group from birth, through school and work stages, to old age and death."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ottawa Herald, 1 July 1972.

<sup>56</sup> This contrast remains one of the major problems in the contemporary debate over multiculturalism. See Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition".

<sup>57</sup> Ottawa Herald, 1 July 1972.

This ecological metaphor tried to equate the treatment of the environment with the treatment of multicultural citizens. The community believed that as the natural landscape featured diversity with water, hills, grass, trees, and air, so, too, did Canada's population feature Chinese, Italians, Germans, Haitians, and aboriginal peoples. Politically, therefore, the state had an obligation to extend its recognition of cultural distinctiveness throughout the life of an ethno-cultural minority just as it should protect the variety within Canada's natural landscape.

This line of argument was part of a request for government assistance in the building of a new old-age home for senior citizens in the German-Canadian community of Ottawa. Thus, the life course argument held, perhaps, some material motivation. However, of even greater significance, was the application of contemporary (1970s) ecological discourse to the multicultural debate.<sup>58</sup> Although this issue cannot be explored in depth here, the "interrelationships and interdependencies" of natural and cultural landscapes as argued by the German community reflected their growing understanding in the complexity of citizenship as containing both political and cultural elements.<sup>59</sup>

In resolving history / politics and culture / tradition with citizenship, the Germans of Ottawa argued and demonstrated that human experience was too complex to be reduced to simple, static generalizations. From their own experiences in confronting

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<sup>58</sup> This connection between immigrants' ethnic identities and the natural environment has yet to be explored by scholars, although Simon Schama in *Landscape and Memory* demonstrates that ethnic identity and the natural environment have deep historical precedence in Europe.

<sup>59</sup> This understanding was sharpened over time as multiculturalism made slow headway into the public discourse. See the editorial called "The New Grass Roots", *Ottawa Herald* 1 April 1973, which connected multiculturalism to a peaceful social revolution in Canada.

history and tradition, the Germans of Ottawa observed that ethnic identities evolved with changes in cultural landscapes. Their experiences as immigrants in the 1950s and 1960s exposed them to this process of change long before the levels of government “officially” recognized multiculturalism in the 1970s. This community ‘learning curve’ and the community’s efforts to explain this process to government, reveals that the concept of citizenship within the German Canadians of Ottawa included a fusion of politics and culture, of history’s relationship to the present and future, and of the re-invention of traditions to reflect a German-Canadian ethnic identity.

Chapter Six: Canadian History, Ethnocultural Identities,  
and the German Canadians of Ottawa: Final Thoughts

As the previous four chapters demonstrate, “German-Canadian” was hardly a static category of historical experience, nor were the meanings German Canadians associated with this term monolithic. The case studies took a number of different paths to understand what some of these meanings and experiences were, and yet in their disparate ways they all have illustrated the fluid nature of German-Canadian ethnic identities. As well, in none of the case studies could various cultural symbols, mentalities, or linguistic contests over meanings, be divorced from the political and socio-economic issues which surrounded them. The very “average” and “unspectacular” moments described in the case studies had resonance in the very “large” and “impressive” world of politics and Anglo-Celtic society. This thesis represents, therefore, a new style of “micro-history,”<sup>1</sup> and offers ideas of ethnic identity that challenge some accepted notions of Canadian historical writing. In this conclusion, then, perhaps it is appropriate to explore the implications of this thesis and how it fits into a broader historiographical context.

Three observations made in this thesis seem worthy of some discussion. First, the ethnic identities of German Canadians in postwar Ottawa appear to have been in a constant state of negotiation with political, economic, and social elements of the local cultural landscapes. For example, in the study of St. John’s Lutheran Church, it was

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<sup>1</sup> I use “micro-history” to mean a study of large macro-level forces expressed through the particularities of the micro-level “family,” “community,” or “region.” This understanding was developed largely from Chad Gaffield, “The Micro History of Cultural Relations: Prescott County and the Language of Instruction Controversy,” unpublished paper delivered to the Canadian Historical Association, 1984. I am indebted to Professor Gaffield for this paper and comments from he and my colleagues in the Social History Seminar on my conception of “micro-history.”

demonstrated that a family strategy, the naming of newborn children, during the 1950s and early 1960s, reflected somewhat a changing degree of cultural confidence in the face of perceived anti-German sentiment in popular culture and mass media. Such a study, however, begs the question of whether child-naming was an isolated family strategy which evolved this way. In the second case study, the German Benevolent Society presented an institution whose outlook shifted from a nuclear 'German-only' tone in 1955 to one which encouraged and initiated a multicultural perspective in the 1960s. This shift, it was suggested, mirrored a change in mentalité from feeling like a foreign ethnic group on the edge of Ottawa's society to one closer to the core and mirrored a changing role for the Society's social welfare activities. In both cases, German-Canadian identities appear to have been constructed and negotiated against and with factors we would normally assume to have been far beyond community boundaries.

This primary conclusion has a resonance in recent scholarly literature on Canada's aboriginal peoples. In a pioneering study, John Lutz asks if the fur trade should be seen not as a boundary between aboriginal peoples as "partners" and / or as "obstacles", but as "a middle ground where meanings were exchanged and transformed and new social relations created?"<sup>2</sup> Like Lutz, this thesis sees the idea of "negotiation" and "exchange" as moving the study of aboriginal peoples and immigrants from the area of specialized studies into the broader Canadian social history project.<sup>3</sup> Much as some feminist historians have

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<sup>2</sup> John Lutz, "Work, Wages and Welfare in Aboriginal - Non-Aboriginal Relations, British Columbia, 1849-1970," Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Ottawa (1994), p.17.

<sup>3</sup> Many immigration historians, beginning in Canada with Robert Harney, Howard Palmer, and Jean Burnet, have expressed this idea before but from different perspectives. For a recent example, see Roberto Perin, "Writing About Ethnicity," in John Schultz, ed., Writing About Canada: A Handbook for Modern Canadian History (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1990), pp.201-230.

demonstrated that gender bridged private and public spheres of historical experience, there is perhaps an interesting opportunity to re-visit “immigrant / ethnic” and “aboriginal” public / social spaces as areas in which “they” and “us” did not experience a dichotomous relationship on separate sides of some institutional (e.g. “fur trade,” “church,” “fraternal benefit society,” or “newspaper”) space.

Furthermore, a conception of social spaces as sites of negotiation, recognizes that it is not possible to isolate people from the processes of Canadian history who were without political, economic, or cultural “power.” Hierarchies and power relationships, “them” and “us” in the processes of negotiation, are central to public / social spaces. Yet one cannot approach these pasts from the point of view of just “them” or “us.” Each needed the other to construct and define their experiences and more so their identities, and an understanding of each is therefore central to historical re-construction and representation of their histories.<sup>4</sup> However, specific historical moments and historical spaces revealed to what extent ethnicity, gender, social class, and age were central to individual identity.

The second major conclusion of this thesis is that beyond “transplanting” historical traditions and patterns of community organization, the pre-migration past also enjoyed a cultural relationship with the German Canadians in Ottawa which was neither singular nor consensual among community members. Indeed, the investigation of the Ottawa Herald revealed to some degree the type of roles “traditions” and “history” had in formation of

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<sup>4</sup> This is both a strength and weakness in Kay Anderson, Vancouver’s Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980 (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991). While Anderson’s examination of English-speaking, Canadian state discourse on Chinese immigrants illuminates one-half of the process of identity formation, her lack of Chinese-language source material produced within Vancouver’s Chinatown, makes that half of her discussion less convincing and detailed.

this process during the early 1970s. These roles were significant, it was suggested, for they impacted conceptions of Canadian citizenship. Again, in this public / social space, both “German-Canadian” and “Canadian” forces came into direct contact. This was most evident in the discussions of Christmas and the “right” re-invention of a major family tradition.

The debate which arose over the proper place of the Nazi past in “German-Canadian” postwar life suggests that social memory is a critical component of ethnic identity, particularly community identity. However, the focus of historians on social memory is most often cursory and, in many cases, relegated to a narrative footnote. Yet reflections on the past by historical actors betray wishes for a better present and most certainly an even greater future. This clearly was at the heart of debate within Ottawa’s German-Canadian community over the legacy of a Nazi past. While debates such as the one found in the Ottawa Herald may be rare, social historians have been quite guilty of mining local histories simply for names, dates, and descriptions of important local events. Scholars of literary criticism, such as Roland Barthes, have long recognized that writing is not an arbitrary act and that words, ideas, and form, signify meanings and images well beyond the intentions of the author.<sup>5</sup> In essence, it is possible for historians informed by literary criticism to re-read local histories to search for categories and arrangements, such as “women” versus “girl” or “German” versus “Austrian.” Such representations of the past, regardless of how “true” they may be, present historians with another avenue into the

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<sup>5</sup>See, for example, Roland Barthes, Criticism & Truth, translated by Katrine Pilcher Keuneman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987 [orig. 1966]).

dynamics of social psychology and mentalities.<sup>6</sup> As the examination of the debate over the Nazi legacy reveals, such dynamics are central to the construction of identities.

The third significant conclusion, which is clearly product of the first two, is that German-Canadian identities need to be appreciated as social constructions which despite important cultural commonality still featured a plethora of differences and nuances. For example, not all families gave their children anglicized names nor did all single Germans feel compelled to look for companionship in "safe" German public / social spaces. As well, how many Trudi Hetzels had their identities impacted by domestic violence or other unsavoury experiences? What about those German immigrants who needed welfare and those who provided aid; did they share a common ethnic identity? Furthermore, the debates highlighted in the last case study demonstrated that there were important fissures over both highly sensitive political issues such as the Third Reich and "safer" cultural moments, such as Christmas traditions.

The term "German Canadian," in effect, has been de-stabilized by the findings of this research. Perhaps then, Joy Parr's "German-ness" needs to be reconsidered as having provided more than simply a standard trait within which various gender identities were constructed in Hanover, Ontario. However, in fairness to Parr, the amount of scholarly literature related to German Canadians, much less studies of German-Canadian ethnic identities, upon which she could draw was (and is) negligible.<sup>7</sup> Yet, it begs the question

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<sup>6</sup> For more detailed offerings of how this might be accomplished see Ana Maria Alonso, "The Effects of Truth: Re-Presentations of the Past and the Imagining of Community," *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 1 (1988), pp. 33-57 and Jonathan Friedman, "Myth, History, and Political Identity," *Cultural Anthropology*, 7 (1992), pp. 194-210.

<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, one has to wonder if Parr herself would re-consider the attention she gave to "German-ness" in light of theoretical refinements which have emerged in the six years since *The Gender of Breadwinners* was published.

that with a more developed understanding of “German Canadian” ethnic identities, would Parr make the same conclusions about masculine identities in Hanover? Did the denial of military service in World War I impact the identities of German-Canadian boys even more dramatically than Parr suggests? The conclusions of this thesis certainly hint that the political and socio-cultural trauma of being an “enemy alien” had a longer and more powerful influence over identities than perhaps Parr considered.

The findings of this research also echo the concerns raised by Franca Iacovetta in her recent review of Canadian immigration history.<sup>8</sup> In her article, Iacovetta somewhat sheepishly discusses micro-studies of immigrants under the title “cohesive communities.” Indeed, she expresses great concern that the over-whelming majority of immigrant community studies have been insular, Whiggish, and based upon a simplistic dualism of “us” and “them.” As a result, community ethnic identities emerge from these studies as singular and homogenous. While such results fit neatly into such national myths as “ethnic mosaic,” Iacovetta points out, rightly, that they obscure and deny the “imperfections” and inequality that plagued immigrant communities. She also calls for a more pluralistic conception of ethnic identity, “German-Canadian ethnic identities” rather than “German-Canadian ethnic identity,” which she hopes will open the door to new research directions. Such concerns and suggestions have also been raised in American immigration historiography by the leaders of that field.<sup>9</sup> The methods, concepts, and questions asked in

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<sup>8</sup> Franca Iacovetta, “Manly Militants, Cohesive Communities, and Defiant Domestics: Writing About Immigrants in Canadian Historical Scholarship,” *Labour / Le Travail*, vol.36 (1995), pp.217-252.

<sup>9</sup> Kathleen Neils Conzen, et. al., “The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective From the U.S.A.,” *Journal of American Ethnic History*, vol.12 (1992), pp.3-41.

this thesis seem in much agreement with these calls for more nuanced historical studies of immigrants.

There are epistemological and heuristic implications of micro-studies which expose “difference” and “debate” where consensual homogeneity was thought to rule, that emphasize “negotiation” and “exchange” rather than “hegemony” and “control,” and restore fluidity and change across time and space. Put rather bluntly, social historians interested in ethnicity, especially immigrant ethnicity, must re-consider their questions, data, and representations. While much in this thesis may be thought of as “making a whole lot of something out of nothing,” such as the connection between Christmas traditions and citizenship, a renewed sensitivity to cultural discourses and symbols, will expose avenues of thought and research that may otherwise never been traveled.<sup>10</sup> Canadian social history, especially since Michael Katz, has a long tradition of taking the lead in new directions of historical scholarship.<sup>11</sup> This thesis is a small step down what is slowly emerging as another of these new directions.

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<sup>10</sup> Those interested in the potential and problems of “cultural studies” should consult Fred Inglis, Cultural Studies (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993). For an interesting image of how migration and cultural conflict interconnect see Chad Gaffield, Language, Schooling, and Cultural Conflict: The Origins of the French-Language Controversy in Ontario (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1987), especially Chapter 7, “Cultural Fission in Prescott County.”

<sup>11</sup> See, especially his The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth-Century City (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975) and his references throughout the text to work done by researchers involved with Canadian Social History Project. See also the essays by Chad Gaffield, Joy Parr, Graeme Wynn, and Donald Harman Akenson cited in the Introduction of this thesis for discussions and examples of some of the exciting directions Canadian social history has thus far undertaken.

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