

Chatham County Oral History and Language Study

Project to be Conducted in Chatham

by NCSU's Language and Life Program

This summer, Chatham County natives will be the focus of a new study by the Language and Life Program at NCSU. The research team is looking for Chatham County natives (born and raised in Chatham) who have lived in Chatham for most of their lives to interview. The interviews will be recorded and the team will conduct analyses to look at the question of how language is changing in Chatham as it becomes less rural and more urban. The study will preserve the rich language heritage of Chatham County as our language changes.

But that's not all! A second aim of the project is to record and preserve the interviews as oral histories—asking interviewees about growing up in Chatham and current interests. The NCSU research team will share the interviews with the Chatham County Historical Association (with permission of those interviewed). Oral histories are a great resource for saving local history, so having these stories preserved will be a very good thing for future generations of Chatham residents.

The Chatham County Historical Association will be helping the Language and Life research team publicize the project and recruit individuals willing to be interviewed. The project is looking for adults and teenagers aged 16+, all genders, all races, all walks of life. The project team is especially interested in the opportunity to interview multiple generations of the same family—so they can look at generational differences.

Interviewing has already begun and will continue this summer and into the fall.

If you sign up, interviewers will contact you to arrange a meeting time and place that is convenient for you. The interview can be conducted at your home, if you wish, or at another place with a quiet, private place where the interview can be recorded. The interview should take no more than about one hour of your time.

If you are a native of Chatham who has spent most of your life in the county and might be willing to participate in this project, please get in touch! You'll be helping preserve Chatham's history and language.

For more information, or to sign up, contact Walt Wolfram at wolfram@ncsu.edu or call 919/218-5374.

The Chatham County Historical Association is pleased that the Language and Life Project chose Chatham for this study!