

Chatham County Oral History and Language Study

Project Update ~ August 2019



Dr. Walt Wolfram and several members of the NCSU Language and Life Research team at the Historic Chatham County Courthouse.

Over the past two months, about thirty Chatham County natives have been interviewed by a research team from NCSU's Language and Life Program. The team's goal is to preserve the rich language heritage of Chatham County and to look at how language is changing as Chatham becomes more urban and less rural. At the same time, the interviews record the oral history of Chatham—saving the kind of local history that doesn't get recorded in other ways.

The research team reports that folks in Chatham have been very cooperative

and they are extremely pleased with the interviews completed to date. The project will continue through the fall, as the team aims to conduct at least 100 interviews for the project. Additional volunteers are encouraged to sign up now.

Who should sign up?

The project is looking for adults and teenagers aged 16+—all genders, all races, all walks of life—*who grew up in Chatham County and who have lived here for most of their lives*. As well as individuals, the project team would like to interview multiple generations of the same family when possible—so they can look at generational differences. We would love to have oral histories from people with varied backgrounds so that we capture the stories that only you can tell about growing up and living in Chatham County. Maybe you worked in a chicken plant, picked tobacco, or played music with a local group. Or, perhaps you have special memories of your school days, or of hunting with your uncle or grandfather. Whatever your Chatham County story—we want to record it!

How to sign up?

You can email or call Dr. Walt Wolfram at wolfram@ncsu.edu or call 919-218-5374. A project team member will contact you to answer any questions you might have and 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 quiet, private place where the interview can be recorded. The interview should take no more than about one hour of your time.

If you grew up in Chatham and have spent most of your life in the county, consider participating in this important project. You'll be helping preserve Chatham's history and language.