Chatham County
Language and Oral History Project
Update and Call for Volunteers

The Language and Life Project team from NC State was back at the Historic Chatham County Courthouse on February 23rd to tell us what they have learned so far from their interviews with your Chatham County friends and neighbors and to let us know how they will share the results of the completed study.

In the summer of 2019, the Language and Life Project (LLP), in cooperation with the Chatham County Historical Association (CCHA), started conducting interviews to study and archive changing language and life in Chatham County. The team has now completed more than 45 interviews with speakers ranging from to 16 to 100 years of age, and plan to complete more than 100 interviews over the next year.

While the main goal of the NC State team is to study the changing language of life-long county residents, the project will also save the stories of those residents about life in Chatham County—providing a rich historical resource for the future.

At the February 23rd program, the LLP team, under the direction of Dr. Walt Wolfram, discussed the progress of the Chatham project so far, offered demonstrated some possible ways that the oral histories and other products in this cooperative effort might be shared.

The team believes strongly that academic publications should not be their only products. They want to give back to the community that provides the data for their research. We at CCHA are excited about their plans to share our Chatham County oral histories on a website and in an interactive museum exhibit.

The research team is eager to conduct more interviews with life-long Chatham residents. Any person who is at least 16 years old and has lived in Chatham Country for at least three quarters of their life is eligible to be interviewed. From young adults to great grandparents, every person's story reveals something significant about life in Chatham County.

The research team now has a website where it is easy to learn more about the project and to sign up for a callback.

Learn more about the project here.