

ARCHIVAL SUMMER SEMINAR IN GERMANY 2005

Between May 29 and June 11, eleven graduate students from North American universities traveled to Germany as part of the thirteenth GHI Summer Seminar. The group visited research institutions and met with archivists and scholars in Koblenz, Cologne, and Gotha. The aim of the seminar was to prepare the young scholars for the practical aspects of their prospective dissertation research in German archives and libraries. In order to achieve this goal, participants first learned to decipher documents in various types of old German handwriting. They were also introduced to several archives and libraries to develop a sense of the diversity of research institutions available. Finally, German and American scholars engaged in archival research met with the group to discuss and share research methods and experiences.

Koblenz once again served as the port of entry to this year's seminar. Walter Rummel of the *Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz* was our instructor for the first week, during which he offered five sessions on paleography. He prepared examples of different handwriting ranging from the sixteenth through the twentieth century. After a brief introduction to the history of how German handwriting evolved, the participants soon moved on to practical exercises, reading texts aloud or transcribing them, requiring less and less help from their mentor.

Koblenz is also the home of the *Bundesarchiv*. Archivist Michael Hollmann took the group on a "backstage" tour of the facilities, explained the philosophy of storing and preserving files, and introduced the participants to the peculiarities of German *Verwaltung*, including the hierarchies indicated by different ink colors and the "secret signs" researchers can encounter on contemporary documents. At the Bundesarchiv, the group also met with Philipp Gassert of Heidelberg University. Gassert shared his experience researching a biography of former Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger. He explained how to identify relevant source material, establish first contact with an archive, take notes, manage time, and organize the newfound material in order to prepare for the writing phase.

In keeping with tradition, the last evening in Koblenz was reserved for dedicated study of the local wine culture at *Weinhaus Schwaab* in Koblenz-Güls on the Mosel River. The participants had ample opportunity to sample Grauburgunder, Spätburgunder, and Riesling, and to discuss the merits of Spätzle vs. Rösti. After one more morning of class, the group relocated to Cologne to enjoy a weekend without files, archives, or archivists.

In Cologne, the group spent the first full day at the *Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln*, Germany's largest communal repository, where we were received by Eberhard Illner and Letha Böhringer. The two seasoned ar-

chivists introduced the group to the multifaceted history of Cologne and showed them some of the archive's most valuable and curious pieces. The participants went roaming the stacks together with Herr Illner and came upon unique posters from the student movement in Paris, a letter by Charlie Chaplin, and the personal papers of former Reichskanzler Wilhelm Marx—a wide range of materials that they had not necessarily expected to find in Cologne's city archive. Lunch was taken at *Malzmühle*, a traditional Kölsch establishment, where the group found itself at the table where President Clinton enjoyed his Halve Hahn in 1999.

On the second day, the group was welcomed at the Historisches Archiv des Erzbistums Köln. Archivist Joachim Oepen introduced the participants to the holdings of the archive and explained the intricate story of provenance of records against the backdrop of a seemingly ever-changing territorial map, populated with archbishops and Electors (Kurfürsten), who, for the sole purpose of confusing American students of early modern German history, might even appear in personal union and constantly rearrange their territories.

On the same day, the seminar participants were invited to visit the August Sander photo archive, administered by the SK Stiftung Kultur. Sander can rightly claim his place as one of the most important photographers of the twentieth century. He is best known for his "People of the Twentieth Century," a collection of several hundred portraits of people from different social backgrounds. Sander took these portraits during the 1920s. At the time, his pictures were cutting edge work in photography and are today seen in the context of "New Objectivity" [*Neue Sachlichkeit*]. Besides holding the August Sander Archive, the SK Stiftung Kultur currently exhibits photography of Erich Salomon, the famous Berlin press photographer of the 1920s, or, as Aristide Briand called him, "le roi des indiscret." As a well-formed contrast, Salomon's pictures are accompanied by an exhibition of Barbara Klemm's press photography of the 1980s and 1990s. Claudia Schubert of SK Stiftung Kultur gave the participants an insightful tour of the two exhibitions.

In the evening, the participants were invited to a book presentation at the restaurant L. Fritz, named after a contemporary photographer from Cologne, the late L. Fritz Gruber. The book, by historian Jürgen Müller and commissioned by the Kölner Gesellschaft für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit, explores the history of the Cologne cabaret *Kolibri* 1930–1933. It retrieves the story of the little theater and its mostly Jewish cast. For the occasion, actors Sabine Postel and Joachim Król read *Kolibri* sketches about political crisis and recurring elections that sounded surprisingly current in the context of the announcement of new federal elections last June.

The last stop in Cologne was the EL-DE Haus. Formerly the Gestapo headquarters, the EL-DE Haus was turned into a museum and research

center in the 1980s. It houses an exhibition on Cologne during National Socialism and incorporates the former prisoner cells in the basement, including the prisoners' graffiti on the walls of the cells, a rare and disquieting feature. The director of EL-DE Haus, Werner Jung, led the group through the exhibition and took the time for a discussion about the history of the site, the concept of the exhibition, and the challenges to research posed by the history of everyday life in Nazi Germany in general and in Cologne in particular.

On Wednesday of the second week, the group traveled to Gotha in Thuringia and discovered immediately that life in the provinces is less expensive and comes with less traffic, making for a perfect, if sleepy, town. A very good reason to travel to Gotha, however, is the famous research library located in Schloss Friedenstein. This library came into being with the partition of the Ernestine territories in 1640, and benefited from the collecting instinct of Duke Ernest the Pious. The library holds over 570,000 volumes, and stands as a vivid witness to Gotha's glorious past as a center of enlightened political and philosophical thought. Our host in Gotha, Rupert Schaab, organized a two-day program for the participants. It included a tour of the library that occupies the entire east wing and east tower of the impressive baroque palace. Another unforgettable highlight was a tour of the former publishing house Justus Perthes, publisher of the *Stieler Weltatlas* and the *Almanach de Gotha*, known simply as "the Gotha." Evelyn Ernst led the group through the impressive collection that consists of a geographical library dating back to the company's beginnings in the late eighteenth century, historical maps and globes, and the company's business correspondence. She explained the art of composing maps as hand-colored engravings. This skillful diligence, paired with cutting-edge geographical research, made the *Stieler* the most precise and usable atlas of its time. The Perthes collection is still held in its original location, contributing greatly to the impression of entering a time warp, throwing the visitor back into the days of the spirit of discovery of the nineteenth century and then forward into the office culture of the GDR's VEB Geographisch-Kartographische Anstalt Gotha.

In addition, the group attended several small workshops. Cornelia Hopf introduced the participants to working with medieval and modern handwritten scripts, and laid out the history of books and book printing. Kathrin Paasch taught how to work with incunabula. In another session, she gave an overview of the German library system, explaining what a student can expect to find in a university library, a seminar library, or a public library, and how German library catalogues are organized. In a final meeting, Wolfgang Helbich familiarized the group with the library's collection of the letters that German immigrants to the United States wrote back to their homeland. Helbich built up the collection during his time as

professor of American history at the University of Bochum and brought it to the Forschungsbibliothek Gotha.

The two-week seminar ended with a lively presentation by William Glenn Gray, professor of modern German history at Purdue University. Drawing on his research experience for his book *Germany's Cold War: The Global Campaign to Isolate East Germany 1949–1969*, he provided valuable tips from the perspective of a former American graduate student working on a limited time and financial budget without the chance to return to an archive to check for the missing comma. His presentation did not shy away from the “nitty gritty” of archival work, including some thoughts on note-taking and “coming up for air” during the intense weeks and months of primary research. The last evening was spent in the company of Herr Helbich, who took the group to the idyllic Thuringian village Schnepfenthal for dinner at the village’s *Gasthaus Zur Tanne*.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all the individuals and organizations that contributed to the 2005 Summer Seminar in Germany. An announcement of the program for the 2006 seminar is already on the GHI website.

Astrid M. Eckert

Summer Seminar Participants and their Topics

ROBIN BARRY, Clark University; dissertation project: “German Opposition to Genocide: The Herero 1904–1907.”

PETER ENGELKE, Georgetown University; dissertation project: “Humanizing the City? The Spatial Politics of Downtown Central Europe, 1960–1975.”

CHAD FULWIDER, Emory University; dissertation project: “The Kaiser’s Most Loyal Subjects? The German View of America and German-Americans during World War I.”

ERIN HOCHMAN, University of Toronto; dissertation project: “For *Volk*, *Heimat*, *Vaterland*, and *Republik*? (Re)Constructions and Contestations of Community in Vienna and Berlin, 1918–1929.”

KAREN HUNG, Institute of Fine Arts, NYU; dissertation project: “The *Schnitzaltar* as *Gesamtkunstwerk*.”

JOURDEN T. MOGER, University of California, Santa Barbara; dissertation project: “Wolfgang Koenigstein and the Reformation in Frankfurt am Main, 1520–1548.”

EMILY PUGH, Graduate Center of CUNY; dissertation project: “The Berlin Wall and the Urban Space of East and West Berlin, 1961–1989.”

JUERGEN SCHAUPP, University of Wisconsin, Madison; dissertation project: "Emil F. Ruedebusch: A Progressive German-American in the Age of Anarchy, Free Love, and Comstock."

ALICE WEINREB, University of Michigan; dissertation project: "Cold War, Hot Bodies: Body Discourse between East and West Germany."

JAMES WRZOSEK, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; dissertation project: "The People's Healers and Hitler's Soldiers: The German Medical Profession and the Construction of the Racial State, 1939-1945."

XIAO WU, Princeton University; dissertation project: "The German Empire in East Asia: *Weltpolitik* in Northeast China."