

ARCHIVAL SUMMER SEMINAR IN GERMANY, 2006

Seminar in Koblenz, Cologne, and Weimar, June 19–30, 2006. Jointly organized by the GHI, the Bundesarchiv Koblenz, and the Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz. Convener: Anke Ortlepp (GHI).

In this year's Archival Summer Seminar, ten graduate students from North American universities traveled to Germany. From June 19 to June 30, the group visited research institutions and met with archivists and scholars in Koblenz, Cologne, and Weimar. The aim of the seminar was to introduce these young scholars to the practical aspects of their prospective dissertation research in German archives and libraries. To achieve this goal, participants learned to read documents in various types of old German handwriting. They visited different local, state, and federal archives and libraries to develop a sense of the diversity of the research institutions available. They also met with German and American scholars engaged in archival research to discuss research methods and practices.

As in previous years, Koblenz once again served as the starting point. 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.

Koblenz also is the home of the Bundesarchiv. Archivist Jörg Filthaut 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 the German *Verwaltung*, including the hierarchies indicated by different ink colors and the "secret signs" researchers can find on contemporary documents. At the Bundesarchiv, the group also met with Till van Rahden of the University of Cologne. He shared his experience doing research for both his current research project (notions of fatherhood in postwar Germany) and his previous one (a history of Jews and other Germans in turn-of-the-century Breslau). With great enthusiasm he explained how to establish first contact with an archive, how to identify relevant source material, take notes, manage time, and organize the newfound material in order to prepare for the writing phase.

In Cologne, the group spent the first day at the Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln, Germany's largest community repository. Archivists Thomas Deres and Letha Böhringer introduced the group to the multifaceted history of Cologne and showed them some of the archive's most valuable and curious pieces. Among them was a copy of the *Verbundbrief* of the city of Cologne as well as a number of documents, pictures, and

maps documenting the history of the Cologne soccer stadium, one of the arenas for this year's soccer World Cup, which drew the attention of the participants in their spare time.

On the second day, the group was welcomed to the Historisches Archiv des Erzbistums Köln. Archivist Joachim Oepen introduced the participants to the holdings of the archive and explained the intricate story of the provenance of records against the backdrop of a seemingly ever-changing territorial map, populated with archbishops and Electors (*Kurfürsten*), who might even appear in personal union and who constantly rearranged 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 *Neue Sachlichkeit*. Besides holding the August Sander Archive, the SK Stiftung Kultur currently exhibits photography of Bernd and Hilla Becher. Their exhibit "Zeche Concordia" documents the industrial architecture of a coalmine after its shutdown and shortly before its demolition. Claudia Schubert of SK Stiftung Kultur gave the group an insightful tour of the exhibition.

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 and, a rare and disquieting feature, the prisoners' graffiti on the walls of the cells. 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 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 Weimar to visit the Gedenkstätte Buchenwald and the Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek. At Buchenwald, Roland Werner led the participants on an extensive tour of the grounds of the former Nazi concentration camp and the special camp that followed under the control of the Soviet military administration. He gave an introduction to the work of the memorial foundation and elaborated on the different ways in which the grounds are now used and were used in the German Democratic Republic to remember the Holocaust. Harry Stein then introduced the group to the archeological work that he and his colleagues undertake. He gave a tour of the rich collection of everyday objects that the excavations of several garbage

dumps on the camp grounds have produced and explained how these objects enable historians to reconstruct everyday life in the camp. Archivist Sabine Stein then presented the participants with the collection of official camp records that the Gedenkstätte holds and that are mainly used to answer inquiries by former inmates or their families. To conclude, Holm Kirsten introduced a DFG-funded research project that aims at making the vast collection of photographic material accessible that the foundation owns. He explained how historians can work with photographs as primary source material and how databases can be used as research and organizational tools.

The summer seminar's last day started off with an extensive tour of the Herzogin Anna Amalia Library. Director Michael Knoche introduced the participants to the different features of the research library's new building (which was unaffected by the fire that ravaged the old rococo library and reading room two years ago) and its extensive holdings as one of the biggest repositories for German classic writing and literature.

In addition, the group attended several small workshops. Johannes Mangei introduced participants to the use of several bibliographies and in addition 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. He and his colleague Matthias Hageböck then presented the group with examples from the library's vast collection of *Personal- and Gelegenheitsschriften*, elaborately decorated texts that were commissioned as, for example, birthday gifts for the reigning duke. Last but not least, Annett Carius-Kiehne discussed how the library deals with books and other materials that have been classified as *Nazi-Raubgut*.

The two-week seminar ended with a lively presentation by Dorothee Brantz from SUNY Buffalo. Drawing on her research experience for her book project "Slaughter in the City: The Rise of Modern Abattoirs in Nineteenth-Century Paris, Berlin, and Chicago," she 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 a reference. Her presentation did not shy away from the "nitty gritty" of archival work, including some thoughts on note taking and taking a break during the intense weeks and months of primary research.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all the individuals and organizations that contributed to the 2006 Summer Seminar in Germany. An announcement of the program for the 2007 seminar can be found on our website at http://www.ghi-dc.org/scholarship_summer.html.

Anke Ortlepp

Summer Seminar Participants and Their Topics

DEBORAH A. BROWN, UCLA, dissertation project: "The Construction of Race in Post-World War I Germany"

BRADLEY COATES, McMaster University, dissertation project: "Czech, German or Bohemian: Sudeten German Identity and the Nazi Regime"

KIERRA CRAGO-SCHNEIDER, UCLA, dissertation project: "Interactions between German-Jewish Survivors and American Forces in post-Holocaust Germany"

MARC LANDRY, Georgetown University, dissertation project: "Tinkering with the Tower: Wildbachverbauung and Flood Control in the Alps, 1850–1914"

KRISTIN POLING, Harvard University, dissertation project: "The Defortification of the German City"

GLEN PETER RYLAND, University of Notre Dame, dissertation project: "Translating Africa in Germany: Rhenish Missionaries and German Notions of Race, 1829–1939"

STEPHEN J. SCALA, University of Maryland, College Park, dissertation project: "Foreign Policy Experts in East Germany and the Soviet Union, 1945–1971"

PETER STAUDENMAIER, Cornell University, dissertation project: "Race Thinking between Science and Spiritual Renewal: The Racial and Ethnic Doctrines of Rudolf Steiner and their Reception within the Early Anthroposophical Movement"

JASON L. STRANDQUIST, Pennsylvania State University, dissertation project: "Negotiating Decline: Luebeck's Creation of a New Identity in Early Modern Northern Europe, 1563–1618"

ALENA WILLIAMS, Columbia University, dissertation project: "Movement in Vision: Cinematic Experiments of the Avant-Garde, Berlin 1920–1930"