

A3389

RECORDS CONCERNING THE CENTRAL COLLECTING POINTS
("ARDELIA HALL COLLECTION"): SELECTED MICROFILM
REPRODUCTIONS AND RELATED RECORDS, 1945–1949

National Archives and Records Administration
Washington, DC
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INTRODUCTION

On the 76 rolls of this microfilm publication, A3389, are reproduced an original set of microfilms consisting of selected files from the restitution records of the central collecting points, along with a number of documents and manuscripts temporarily in State Department custody after the central collecting points of the Office of Military Government, U.S. Zone (Germany) [OMGUS] were closed. A copy of the original microfilm was transferred to the National Archives from the State Department with the central collecting point files. The microfilm and additional records of the central collecting points are located in the Records of United States Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Record Group (RG) 260.

BACKGROUND

The basic authority for taking custody of property in Germany was contained in Joint Chief of Staff (JCS) Directive 1067/6, which directed the U.S. Zone Commander to “impound or block” certain specified categories of property, including those of the German Reich; the Nazi Party and affiliated organizations and their prominent members; and absentee owners of non-German nationality, including United Nations and neutral governments and individuals. The American Zone Commander was also required to impound all property that was transferred under duress or through wrongful acts of confiscation, disposition, or spoliation, and to block the relocation of works of art and cultural material of value or importance, regardless of its ownership. When the U.S. Army entered Germany in September 1944, provisions were made for the seizure of all categories of property including that of the Nazi Party organization.

At the cessation of hostilities in May 1945, a number of temporary collecting points were set up by the 12th Army Group to store all cultural objects found in the U.S. zone in need of preservation or suspected of having been looted by the Germans. The seized property was turned over to the custody of the Office of Military Government, U.S. Zone (Germany) [OMGUS] when it became the successor to the U.S. Group Control Council, Germany (USGCC) on October 1, 1945. OMGUS was responsible for administering the U.S. zone of occupation and U.S. sector of Berlin, and for functioning as the U.S. element of organizations comprising the Allied Control Authority, the name given to the four-power occupation control system.

Within OMGUS, the seized works of art eventually came under the control of the Property Division. The Property Division, established in March 1948, was created as the result of a reorganization of OMGUS functions related to finance, the economy, transport, communications, restitution, reparations, decartelization, and property control. The primary responsibility of the Property Division was to formulate and implement policies required in the fields of property control, German external assets, internal and external restitution, and reparations.

By 1946 only four of the collecting points remained and were located in Munich, Wiesbaden, Marburg, and Offenbach. After June 15, 1946, when the Marburg Central

Collecting Point was closed, the remaining three central collecting points (CCPs) became specialized.

The Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point held mostly German-owned material, especially that of the former Prussian State Museums, the Staedel Institute of Frankfurt, and the local museums of Wiesbaden, plus a certain amount of internal loot (materials confiscated from German nationals) and objects subject to restitution. At its height, this installation contained approximately 700,000 objects.

The Munich Central Collecting Point specialized largely in materials subject to restitution, although it also contained cultural objects of the Bavarian State Museums. At its height, this central collecting point held in excess of one million objects.

The third of the specialized CCPs, the Offenbach Archival Depot, devoted itself primarily to Jewish religious items, books, and archives. It handled more than 2½ million objects during its four years of operation.

The transition from military to civilian occupation administration was initiated by the Presidential appointment of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany (HICOG), who assumed his duties on September 2, 1949. OMGUS organizations were progressively abolished and all functions transferred to HICOG organizations between June and September 1949. The Offenbach Archival Depot was closed in June 1949. Upon the termination of the Property Division on July 1, 1949, the property control functions with respect to the liquidation of claims devolved on the Central German Property Control Agency in Munich. Its directorate was composed of the four Land Civilian Agency Heads in the U.S. zone. The transition was completed by September 21, 1949, the same day of the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany. OMGUS was formally abolished on December 5, 1949.

The Munich and Wiesbaden CCPs closed in August 1951, although some cultural objects remained at both facilities under U.S. control after that date. The Office of Public Affairs of the Office of the High Commissioner for Germany exercised residual restitution authority for these objects. Most of the OMGUS records, including the records of the Property Division, were retired to an Army record center in Kansas City until they were accessioned into the National Archives in the early 1960s.

During the period in which the CCPs operated, they administered the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives (MFAA) Sections of Bavaria, Bremen, Hesse, and Württemberg-Baden. They also received policy guidance from the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Section of OMGUS general headquarters. The composition of the records of the CCPs is unique among the records of OMGUS headquarters. The Offices of Military Government for Bavaria and Hesse created most of the records concerning the CCPs through their restitution and preservation programs from 1945 to 1949, but the records also contain materials of monuments and fine arts officers assigned to Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) and U.S. Forces, European Theater Headquarters; records of Headquarters, Office of Military Government, U.S. Zone (Germany) [OMGUS]; records of the Office of the High Commissioner for Germany; and some papers added to various

files by State Department's Arts and Monuments Adviser, Ardelia Hall, while the records were on "loan" to her from 1954 to 1961. Because Ms. Hall worked extensively with these records, which were combined into one body, they are referred to as the "Ardelia Hall Collection."

RECORDS DESCRIPTION

These 76 microfilm rolls were originally produced by the Department of State from selected files of the restitution records of the central collecting points and from a number of other documents and manuscripts, all of which were temporarily in its custody. Copies of these State Department microfilms were transferred to the National Archives with the central collecting point files. The rolls are arranged by subject, and major portions consist of the following: miscellaneous records such as the Latin manuscripts *Liber Sapientiae* and *Mainz Psalter*, a manuscript *De Africa* by Petrarch, a manuscript *Political Testament of Frederick the Great*, 1752, and W. Froehner's *L'Orfevriere, Collections du Chateau De Goluchow* (Paris, 1897); a list of objects stored at repositories in Berlin; restitution files of the MFAA Sections in Berlin and the Munich CCP; records returned to Okinawa such as 17th–19th century genealogies of the royal family of the Ryukyu Islands; captured German documents relating to plans for Linz; and captured German documents relating to the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR).

RELATED RECORDS

Textual Records in the National Archives

GENERAL RECORDS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, RECORD GROUP (RG) 59

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Records Maintained by the Fine Arts and Monuments Adviser 1945–1961 ("Ardelia Hall Collection") (Lot File 62D-4) [A1, Entry 3104A]¹

RECORDS OF THE AMERICAN COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION AND SALVAGE OF ARTISTIC AND HISTORICAL MONUMENTS IN WAR AREAS, 1943–1946, RG 239

RECORDS OF U.S. OCCUPATION HEADQUARTERS, WORLD WAR II, RG 260

Office of Military Government, U.S. Zone (Germany) [OMGUS]

Property Division, Reparations and Restitutions Branch, Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives (MFAA) Section

Cultural Property Claim Applications, 1946–1948

This series includes a duplicate of the restitution files reproduced on rolls 23–40 of this microfilm publication.

¹ Textual record series designators usually consist of the series title with a date span, the finding aid notation, and the Master Location Register (MLR) entry number, shown here in brackets.

Property Division, Records Concerning the Central Collecting Points (“Ardelia Hall Collection”)

OMGUS Headquarters Records, 1938–1951

Records of the Marburg Central Collecting Point, 1945–1949

Records of the Munich Central Collecting Point, 1945–1951

Restitution Claim Records, 1945–1947

This series includes a duplicate of the restitution files reproduced on rolls 47–63 of this microfilm publication.

Records of the Offenbach Archival Depot, 1946–1951

Records of the Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point, 1945–1952

Miscellaneous Property Reports, 1945–1948

National Archives Microfilm Publications

M1782, *OSS Art Looting Investigation Unit Reports, 1945–46*

M1943, *ERR (Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg) Card File and Related Photographs, 1940–1945.*

This microfilm publication reproduces the ERR photographic albums (on rolls 36–38) that are also included on rolls 73–76 of publication A3389, described in this introduction.

National Archives Publications

Researchers should also consult *Holocaust-Era Assets: A Finding Aid to Records at the National Archives at College Park, Maryland*, compiled by Greg Bradsher (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, 1999). This finding aid includes information on specific areas within military records, such as War Department and Occupation records, as well as civilian records such as those of the State Department, that contain information on looted assets.

Additional information concerning the Holocaust may be located on our web site at www.archives.gov.

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