

M1940

RECORDS CONCERNING THE CENTRAL COLLECTING POINTS
("ARDELIA HALL COLLECTION"): MISCELLANEOUS PROPERTY
REPORTS, 1945–1948

National Archives and Records Administration
Washington, DC
2004

United States. National Archives and Records Administration.

Records concerning the central collecting points ("Ardelia Hall Collection") : miscellaneous property reports, 1945-1948.— Washington, DC : National Archives and Records Administration, 2004.

6 p. ; 23 cm.—(National Archives microfilm publications. Pamphlet describing ; M 1940)

Cover title.

1. Hall, Ardelia – Archives – Microform catalogs. 2. Restitution and indemnification claims (1933-) – Germany – Registers – Microform catalogs. 3. World War, 1939-1945 – Confiscations and contributions – Germany – Archival resources – Microform catalogs. 4. Cultural property – Germany (West) – Archival resources – Microform catalogs. I. Title.

INTRODUCTION

On the six rolls of this microfilm publication, M1940, are reproduced approximately 6,000 property cards and accompanying survey reports regarding German repositories that stored Nazi-confiscated works of art. The Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives (MFAA) Section transferred Nazi-looted works of art and artifacts from various storage areas and shipped the objects to one of four U.S. central collecting points. In order to process restitution claims, the MFAA officers gathered information about the art objects that were looted or damaged, where the art objects were found, and if necessary, where the art objects belonged. This microfilm publication includes a small portion of the records that comprise the "Ardelia Hall Collection." The entire collection is 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 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 in addition it contained the cultural objects of the Bavarian State Museums. At its height, this central collecting point held in excess of a 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 4 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 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

they also contain records 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 the 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

The typescript inventory cards in this microfilm publication describe the movement and disposition of specific private or public art collections, with many of the cards having handwritten annotations. These cards may duplicate other property cards in the custody of the CCPs but their use was based on their arrangement, not their uniqueness. Instead of being arranged in numerical order, the cards in the five series described below were arranged alphabetically. In order to produce the highest quality microfilm image and provide greater clarity and readability, the cards appear slightly larger than the original. No photographs appear in this microfilm publication.

The first series, Miscellaneous Property Cards, 1945–1947, consists of cards describing historical and cultural structures and objects that the Nazis removed from German and Nazi-occupied countries' municipal galleries, museums, and libraries, including the Frankfurt Municipal Gallery Museum, as well as private art and library collections. The cards are annotated and include information on the movement and disposition of the property, name of town or locality, name of the repository, name or type of object, and final disposition. The series is arranged alphabetically by the geographical origins of the property.

The second series, Property Cards Relating to Evacuated Repositories, 1945–1948, documents the European repository (e.g., museum or gallery) from which the Nazis and Germans confiscated artworks and artifacts. Each property card lists the place from which the cultural object was taken and contains an inventory of the type of cultural objects evacuated. The cards also include provenance information such as the name of locality, presumed owner, process of notification, notifier, custodian of the object, status of the investigation, results of the investigation, and title of report providing final disposition. This series is arranged alphabetically in four segments: (1) by American occupation region and thereunder by locality or repository; (2) by name of private collection; (3) by locality indicated on the custody receipts; and (4) by country outside of OMGUS control.

The third series, Records Relating to Repositories of Looted Cultural Objects, 1945, consists of property cards that provide physical descriptions, types of artworks, the location of art repositories from which the looted objects were taken, and the location of where the objects were found. The cards are arranged alphabetically by locality within the American zone.

The fourth series, Records Relating to German Institutions Located Outside the American Zone with Material in Repositories in the American Zone, 1945–1948, documents the shifting of art objects to and from the American occupation zone. The cards indicate items found in the British, French, and Soviet zones that originally came from a collection, repository, or town in the American zone; items found in the American zone that originally belonged in one of the other three zones; and the movement of these items to the zone where it was determined they belonged in order to facilitate restitution to the owner. Included on these receipts are the material type, origin, and disposition of property. The records are arranged alphabetically by locality.

The fifth series, Survey Reports of War Damage to Historical and Cultural Structures in the American Zone, 1945–1948, consists of descriptions of war damage caused upon historic and cultural structures located in the American occupation zone. The reports are in five parts covering the American occupation regions of Bavaria, Hesse, Württemberg-Baden, Berlin, and Bremen, and include the location of the structures, a brief history of the structures, and a description of the postwar condition of the structures. The reports are arranged by occupation region as listed above.

RELATED RECORDS

Textual Records in the National Archives

GENERAL RECORDS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 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 ("THE ROBERTS COMMISSION"), 1943–1946, RG 239

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

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

Records of the Property Division, Records of the Reparations and Restitutions Branch

Records of the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Section (MFAA), 1946–1948

Records of the 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

Records of the Offenbach Archival Depot, 1946–1951

Records of the Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point, 1945–1952

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.

National Archives Accessioned Microfilm

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

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

*Records of the Property Division, Records Concerning the Central Collecting Points
("Ardelia Hall Collection")*

Selected Microfilm Reproductions and Related Records, 1945–1949

National Archives Microfilm Publications

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

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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3	Bavaria: Sanspareil – Miscellaneous: Metternich Report
4	Private Collections: Bauer – Countries: Switzerland
5	Records Relating to Repositories of Looted Cultural Objects, 1945 Aachen – Zwicau-Mulde
6	Records Relating to German Institutions Located Outside the American Zone with Material in Repositories in the American Zone, 1945–1948 Aachen – Worms
	Survey Reports of War Damage to Historical and Cultural Structures in the American Zone, 1945–1948 Bavaria (Part I) – Berlin-Bremen (Parts IV and V)