Introduction to the Collection:

The following finding aid details the present organization of a peculiar collection of 195 documents discovered at Ursinus College in 2009. The organization, interpretation, and current research on the materials have so far been undertaken by three undergraduates at the college over the course of three years. What follows below is designed to serve as a guide to the collection, both in terms of its content as well as the organizing logic behind its still-evolving cataloguing.

Organizationally, the collection is arranged in 15 folders, with Folder I being the smallest (2 documents), and Folder 12 (44 documents) being the largest. The papers span the years 1936–1945, and contain many names and topics both well-known and less well-known in the Nazi German narrative. The collections is perhaps best described in brief as “eclectic,” containing elements and hints of wider projects of which these papers say only a little.

Where the documents came from remains unknown. As they were discovered with the Pennsylvania German Folk-life Collection at Ursinus College, it is believed that the Nazi papers came from one of the collection’s primary collectors, Alfred L. Shoemaker. Drafted into the U.S. Army in 1942, Shoemaker served as an ethnographer and linguist for five years, before returning to academic life and folk-life studies. While Shoemaker’s military record has not been examined in any great detail, it is believed he might have picked up the Nazi papers while serving in Germany.

The papers themselves have similarly foggy origins. Much of the collection comes from a small research branch of the SS known as das Ahnenerbe. Founded in 1935 by Heinrich Himmler, Herman Wirth, and Walter Darré, the Ahnenerbe sought to “re-discover” the lost origins of the Aryan Race. The organization funded several expeditions around the world in search of Aryan civilization, and sponsored research domestically toward similar ends. The papers in the collection bear the marks of the Ahnenerbe’s two primary administrators as of 1937; Wolfram Sievers and Walter Wüst. It is believed that the collection likely came from Wolfram Sievers’ papers, as many of the memos are addressed to him, and most of the other documents bear considerable notation in his hand throughout. The largest known discovery of Sievers’ papers occurred in 1945 outside the town of Waischenfeld in Bavaria. There, in a cave, Sievers had hidden much of his paperwork. The U.S. Army discovered them in 1945, and later used the papers as evidence in Sievers’ war-crimes trial. He was convicted and sentenced to death the following year. While only speculation, it is possible that the materials at Ursinus were also lifted from the cave at Waischenfeld.
Some research has been done utilizing the materials. In 2011, I used documents from Folders IV, XI, and XII in a thesis on the Nazi project of building the Aryan Race. The thesis can be found at Ursinus College.

The difficulties of using the collection became readily apparent during this project. Perhaps the most difficult proved identifying how the documents at Ursinus compared to documents in other repositories of Ahnenerbe material, both in Germany and elsewhere. While some projects of note in the Ursinus material (such as the Atlas of German Ethnography) were readily documented elsewhere, others (such as Sprachpolitik) could be found nowhere else. This suggests that either the references to more obscure topics in the Ursinus collection are buried deeper than I have yet investigated, or that the Ursinus papers constitute one of the few remaining references to such work. It remains unclear which is the case. More work is required on the collection. One will note that the format of the finding aid changes around Folder X, and continues in the new format to the end of the document. This was brought about because of time constraints and difficulty summarizing texts. Future archivists may yet improve the system.

In short, a historian conducting research on the Ahnenerbe would be well-served to include the Ursinus Collection in his or her examination or primary sources, but also to include relevant searches in the more well-established collections in archives in Germany and the United States. The Ahnenerbe Collection at Ursinus College is but one small part of a much wider body of sources, and should be understood as such. It has been my hope to provide some coherence to the collection, and make this new part of Nazi-German source material available for historians.

Folders

Folder I: Bibliographies (likely related to materials in Folder XII)

- 2 documents
  - List der astrologischen Bücher. (List of Astrological Books)
    - 62 pages of English and German sources on Astrology.
    - Occasional notations and corrections.
    - Precise date of production unknown, though a review of the listed sources suggest at earliest 1939.
  - Forschungsdienst: herausgegeben von den Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft der Landbauwissenschaft Band 5 heft 11 1938
    - An excerpt from a journal by G. Franz-Jena on…
    - Volume 5, Issue 11 of Forschungsienst (Research Service).

Folder II: Journals

- 4 documents
  - Die Kulttore Der Indogermanen, by Otto Huth
    - A general internet search yields few results for the term Kulttore aside from references in a few works to Herr Huth’s piece.
    - Document is a reprint from the Archiv für Religionswissenschaft XXXIV. Heft 3/4.
  - Die Kulttore Der Indogermanen, by Otto Huth (w/ note from Sievers)
Folder III: As yet unsorted

- 6 Documents
  o Ahnenerbe memo from Rudolf Siemsen to Wolfram Sievers.
    ▪ Speaks of a report on the state of German Volkskunde.
    ▪ Extensive handwritten notes by Sievers and Walter Wüst
    ▪ Dated 9 June 1939
  o Copy of a policies and proposals by the Central Office of Design in celebration of the Association of German Folk-life.
    ▪ Document signed off by Sievers.
    ▪ 24 pages in length
  o Page one of a memo from the President of the Reich Office for Bodenforschung, W. Keppler to Sievers
    ▪ Dated 30 December, 1944
    ▪ Sent to Waischenfeld office, the final location of Das Ahnenerbe.
  o A folder of materials concerning Dr. Bruno Schweitzer.
    ▪ A lot of copies of a brief biography of Dr. Schweitzer.
    ▪ Includes a handwritten note by Dr. Schweitzer.
    ▪ References to the Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften
  o Memo from the Blut und Boden organization.
    ▪ Written in a script
    ▪ Signature illegible to my eyes.
    ▪ Dated 11 September 1936.
  o Document of many languages
    ▪ Not sure what to make of this one.
- Lists sources concerning important themes in Breton history, geography, economics, folk-studies, language, and national character.
- Published in 1940.
  - A report on the cultural situation in Brittany
    - Authored presumably by M. Olier Mordrel
    - Traces the history of Breton culture in France.
    - Makes proposals concerning Breton-German cooperation.
    - 1 March 1941.
  - Carbon-copy version of the cultural situation of Brittany (with edits)
    - Edits made by M. Olier Mordrel
    - Substantial corrections and some changes.
    - Dated as 14 March 1941.
  - List of French propositions, related to M. Olier Mordrel

Folder V: Related to Norwegian Projects

- 16 Documents
  - A note about a meeting with Ministerialrat Dr. Huhnhäuser by Professor Hans Schwalm
    - Dr. Schwalm was the leader on das Ahnenerbe’s research activities in Norway.
    - Notated by Sievers.
    - Dated 15 September, 1942
    - The note discusses the topics raised at the meeting
      - These include:
        - The goals of the Department of “Wissenschaft un Schule”
        - The plans for the formation of a Research Institute (Forschungsgemeinschaft) in Norway.
        - The activities of Dr. Huhnhäuser regarding propaganda literature
    - Attached is a carbon copy of Dr. Huhnhäusers proposal for the establishment of a research institute in Norway
  - A note regarding the establishment of a German Research institute in Norway
    - Notated by Sievers
    - Signed by Schwalm, dated 17 September 1942.
  - A note about a meeting with Hans S. Jacobsen in Moss on 17 September, 1942.
  - A note about a meeting with Minister Riisnaes (Justice Minister) on 21 October, 1942.
  - A short report about travel information through Norway and Denmark
    - By Bruno Schweitzer, dated 15 May, 1944
    - His trip lasted from 23 April to 13 May, 1944.
  - Note about a meeting with Dr. Huhnhäuser on 16 September, 1942 by Schwalm
  - Plastic sleeved documents
    - 2 documents, both marked Geheim! (Handle delicately, paper is frail)
• Document 1, memo to SS-Gruppenführer Berger regarding the proposal for the establishment for a German research institute in Norway, signed by Rudolf Brandt, Himmler’s personal secretary.
  o Dated 28 September, 1942
• Document 2, memo from the office of Der Reichsführer SS from presumably SS-Gruppenführer Berger (signature hard to read) to Sievers.
  o Dated 22 September, 1942
  o A note about a meeting with Dr. Kern of the Sprachschule Kern Oslo, 14 October, 1942
    ▪ Meeting with Dr. Kern, leader of the Foreign Organization in Oslo for 20 years.
    ▪ An important person in intellectual circles in Norway
    ▪ Dr. Kern complains in 4 hour meeting that Dr. Huhnhäuser’s German Academy is trying to shut his language school down.
    ▪ Includes a discussion of Norwegian intellectuals, and their willingness to support German ideology.
    ▪ Also discussed the possibility of creating an intellectual organization independent of parties or governments.
  o A note about a meeting with Herrn Ivar Saeter, 13 October, 1942
  o A note about a meeting with Dr. Huhnhäuser, 13 October, 1942
  o A note about a meeting with SS-Hauptsturmführer Falk of the SD, 19 October, 1942
  o A note about a meeting with SS-Obersturmführer Dr. Ritz of the SD, 12 October, 1942
  o A note on a management report, 16 October, 1942
  o A note about “Norwegian History” by Martin Gerlach 17 October, 1942
  o A note about a meeting with SS-Sturmbannführer Noot of the SD, 28 October, 1942

Folder VI: Relating to Richard Wolfram—correspondence with Sievers

- 9 documents
  o Memo from Richard Wolfram to Wolfram Sievers, 7 December, 1938
    ▪ Subject: Bericht über Einfluss K.v. Spiess
  o Memo from Richard Wolfram to Wolfram Sievers, 10 December, 1938
    ▪ Subject: Spiess Richtlinien für Julfeirern und Much-Manuskript
  o “Brauchtum in der Ostmark”
    ▪ Wolfram Sievers to Heinrich Himmler
      ▪ Related to the archiving of material collected by Richard Wolfram in Ebensee, St. Johann, and Maxglaner Wetschnalzen from 12 February 1939.
      ▪ Dated 11 March, 1939.
      ▪ Carbon-copy
Memo from Richard Wolfram to Wolfram Sievers, 1 February, 1939
- Speaks of seizing materials in Vienna.
- Mentions materials from St. Johann and Ebensee.

Memo from Richard Wolfram to Wolfram Sievers, 22 March, 1939
- Notations present on document, possibly of Dr. Wolfram’s hand.

Memo from Richard Wolfram to Wolfram Sievers, 10 November, 1939
- Subject: “Erhebungen und Massnahmen wegen Auflösung von Trachtenvereinen in Salzburg, Brauchtumgefährdung”

Folder VII: Reports B
- 7 documents (6 in first sleeve, 1 in second)
  - Report 1A-Menschwerdung und Sprache.
  - Report 2- Volk und Sprache
  - Report 3- Der stille Sprachenkampf im Völkerleben
  - Report 4- Der plangelenkte Sprachenkampf der anderen
  - Report 5-Die geistige Mobilmachung für den Selbsterhaltungskampf der deutschen Sprache.
  - Report 6- Mundart und Hochsprache.
  - Report entitled : Die Kulturpolitische Lage der schwedischen Hochschulen

Folder VIII: Reports A
- 9 Documents
  - Report - Grundsätzliches zur süddeutschen Germanenforschung. Eine Richtigstellung und Antwort an Herrn W. Hülle
    - By Dr. Walter Veeck, Direktor der Württ. Landeskunstsammlungen.
  - Memorandum- Über die Begründung und den wissenschaftlichen Kriegseinsatz eines Institutes für Eurasiatische Raum- und Kulturforschung.
    - By Dr. Hans Findeisen, Berlin
    - October, 1942
    - Includes 2 maps of eastern Europe
  - Report-Das Nachwuchproblem and Sachstand und Lage in der deutschen Volkskunde
  - Discussion of Adolf Spamer’s “Sitte und Brauch” in Handbuch der deutschen Volkskunde.
    - Signed by illegible signature.
- Booklet by Bruno Schweitzer
  - Extensive memo to Himmler and the Reichsgeschäftsführer des “Ahnenerbe”
    - Subject: The craft traditions of the present
    - By: Rudolf Siemsen
    - 9 June, 1939
- 2nd booklet by Bruno Schweitzer
  - Report-Um die Katholische Universität in Salzburg
    - 4 February, 1938

Folder IX: Related to Sprachpolitik, East-Prussian Peasant Rugs, and the War Deployment of Humanities Research

- 5 Documents
  - Proposal for the establishment of a secret State department for Sprachpolitik
    - Signed by Sievers 26 December, 1944.
    - Noted in following document that proposal is made by Dr. Georg Schmidt-Rohr.
  - Note-on the secret state department of Sprachpolitik
    - Marked Geheim!
    - Dated 19 February, 1945
    - Proposal by Dr. Georg Schmidt-Rohr
    - Signed by Sievers
  - Note-East Prussian Peasant rugs
    - Dated 4 March, 1938
    - Signed by illegible
    - Mentions Dr. Konrad Hahm
  - Opinion by Dr. Plassmann regarding Dr. Hahn’s East Prussian Peasant rugs
  - Report-Veröffentlichungsplan der Kriegseinsatzarbeiten der Geisteswissenschaften
    - Rich with names and topics.
    - Possible plan to reinterpret history racially.

Folder X: Miscellaneous notes, memos and other

- 32 documents + some assorted papers
  - Memo from Sievers to Der Reichsführer SS, Chef des Sicherheitshauptamtes, and Dr. Six: Subject: Verbreitung kabbalisticher Bücher, 4 March, 1939.
    - Carbon copy
    - Marked by Sievers
  - Same as above, another carbon copy
  - Opinion paper by SS-Sturmmann Mai
    - Signed by Sievers and Walter Wüst
    - Mention of Dr. Six
  - Memo from Pohl to Professor Teudt regarding Dr. Schweitzer’s teaching
    - 3 December, 1937
  - Memo from Sievers to Dr. Six, 26 May, 1938
- Mentions Harmjanz in reference to an “Index” of ethnographic literature.
  - Memo from Sievers to Dr. Erich Rohr, 26 May, 1938
    - Brief memo regarding an interesting report Dr. Rohr provided for Sievers.
    - Carbon copy
  - French letter from Olier Mordrel to Sievers, 14 March 1941.
  - Memo from Röhr to Sievers, 25 May, 1938
    - Concerning a report with 4 photos.
    - Mentions Walter Wüst and Heinrich Harmjanz
    - Very brief
  - Brief hand written note by Sievers
    - Usual Sievers handwriting, can’t read it personally
  - Brief memo from Dr. W. Spengler to Sievers, 4 Muli (probably means July), 1938
    - Regarding confidential files
  - Invitation to Sievers to Bruno Schweitzer’s engagement, Christmas, 1937
    - Includes a note by Sievers.
- The remaining 21 documents could not be properly assessed given time constraints. Please see Folder for more details.

Folder XI: Related to “The Atlas of German Volkskunde” and Eduard Wildhagen

- 18 Documents
  - Date range: 1938-1939
  - Names:
    - Eduard Wildhagen
    - Heinrich Harmjanz
    - Rudolf Mentzel
    - Walter Wüst

Folder XII: Dowsing rod research, Joseph Wimmer, Paul Beyer

- 44 documents
  - Date range- 1937-1941
  - Names:
    - Walter Wüst
    - Wolfram Sievers
    - Dr. Paul Beyer
    - Dr. Joseph Wimmer
    - Reinhard Heydrich
    - Heinrich Himmler
    - Dr. Karl Brandt

Folder XIII: Related to Walter Wüst and Otto Huth

- 15 Documents
  - 1937-1940
  - Includes memo regard Matthes Ziegler
Folder XIV: *Völkischer Beobachter* clippings

- 7 documents
  - Date range: 1937-1938
  - Article clippings, some concerning German *Volkskunde*
  - One clipping on dowsing

Folder XV: Related to the *Deutsches Forschungsgemeinschaft* and *Heinrich Harmjanz*

- 16 documents
  - Prominent names and organizations:
    - *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*
    - *Zentralarchiv der deutschen Volkserzählung*
    - Dr. Gottfried Henßen
    - Dr. Misch Orend-Hermannstadt
    - Bruno Schweitzer
    - Wolfram Sievers
    - Rudolf Mentzel
  - Date Range: 1938-1939