

<%method title>Preservation of the photographic archive of the German Colonial Society and making it accessible at the Stadt-und Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt a.M.

# Preservation of the photographic archive of the German Colonial Society and making it accessible at the Stadt-und Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt a.M.

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## The photographic collection

The German Colonial Society (Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft =DKG) was the largest and most influential society of the German colonial movement with 42.000 members strong. It existed from 1882 until 1943, even when it was incorporated in the Reichskolonialverbund as from 1933.

The most important aspect of the Society's public activities were the lectures, which even in the 1880ies were effectively illustrated by its guest speakers using glass plate positive slides. This formed the foundation of the Society's own collection of photographs. The period of documentation covered by the Society's photographic collection ranges from the rare single large plates of the 1860ies to the first colour slides at the end of the 1930ies.

The collection provides information on the Society's supporters, the activities of the German colonial movement in general, and documents German colonial history. The following areas are covered in an extensive regional part ( Charts 1 and 2) which document colonial interests:



Karte "Deutschland und seine Kolonien"



Weltkarte

1. Togo,
2. Kamerun,
3. Namibia / German Southwest Africa,
4. Tansania / German East Africa,
5. Ruanda / German East Africa,
6. Burundi / German East Africa,
7. People's Republic of China / Kiautschou (Tsingtau),
8. Papua-Neuguinea / Kaiser-Wilhelmsland und Bismarck-Archipel,
9. Palau,
10. Federation of Micronesia / Carolinen and Marianen,
11. Marshall-Inseln,
12. Nauru,
13. West-Samoa / German Samoa. Furthermore, the settlements of Germans in Latin America (e.g. Blumenau in Brasil) and Australia are also documented.

The main emphasis is on expeditions and scientific trips, geology and mining, vegetation and local agriculture, countryside and animal studies, the settlement activities of local and white people, schools and missions, traditional commerce and transport, introduction of modern means of transport (docks, railway, roads), the economic development by Europeans, peace-keeping forces and rebellions. The same themes are also covered for colonies in other states in Africa, Asia, Australia and Oceania.



Agriculture



Introduction of modern means of transport

The photographic collection of the DKG was stored in mine shafts in Thüringen at the end of the Second World War. It was then secured by American troops and finally, together with 15 000 volumes of the existing library of the DKG, donated to the Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt a.M. under the then residing director Hanns Wilhelm Eppelsheimer. The entire collection comprises approx. 55.000 items.

Pictures can be subdivided into the following groups:

- ca. 5.000 partially coloured positive slides (10x10cm)
- ca. 25.000 glass plate negatives
- ca. 3.500 small picture slides ( b/w, half-size)
- ca. 1.000 small picture slides ( colour)
- ca. 20.000 black and white negatives and prints.

The Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt a.M. now has a large, unique photographic collection of historico-cultural value of German colonial activities. The preservation measures and classification are of great significant scientific value.

### *The condition of the collection*

The photographs are stored in cardboard boxes. The material has suffered from long storage and aging. Many pictures show scratches, are stuck together, are faded, have broken glass, silver has leaked, salt deposits have developed, and the layers of film has dissolved. All pictures are extremely dusty.

### *The contents of the photographs*

It seems that the photographs were carefully packed systematically for its period of storage, but its original order has suffered from the long trek initiated by the the War. Only when a text is directly with or next to the photographs is the content of the picture easy to identify.