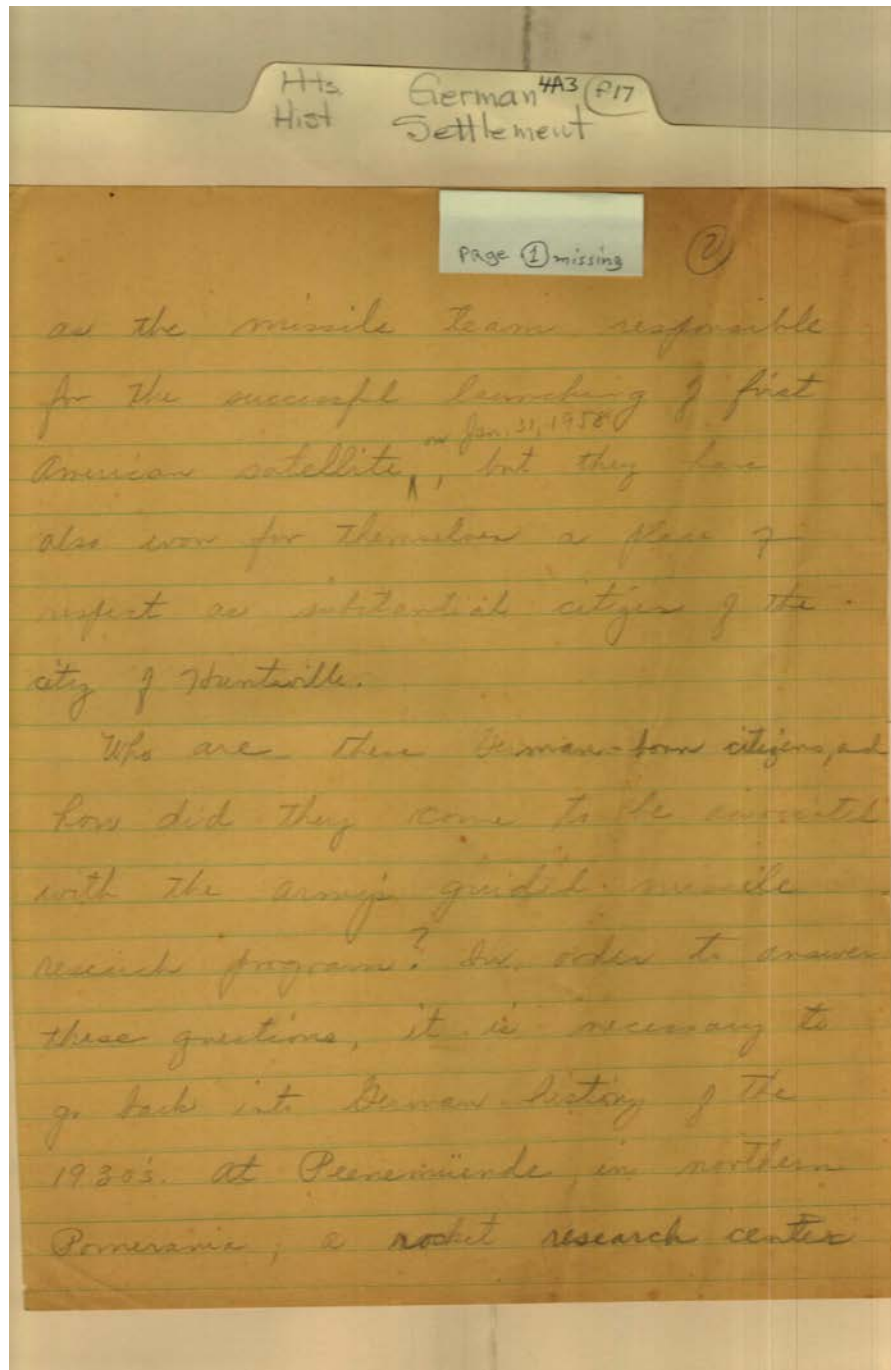


Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 3, Folder 17

German Settlement in Huntsville by Frances C. Roberts

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**Names:**

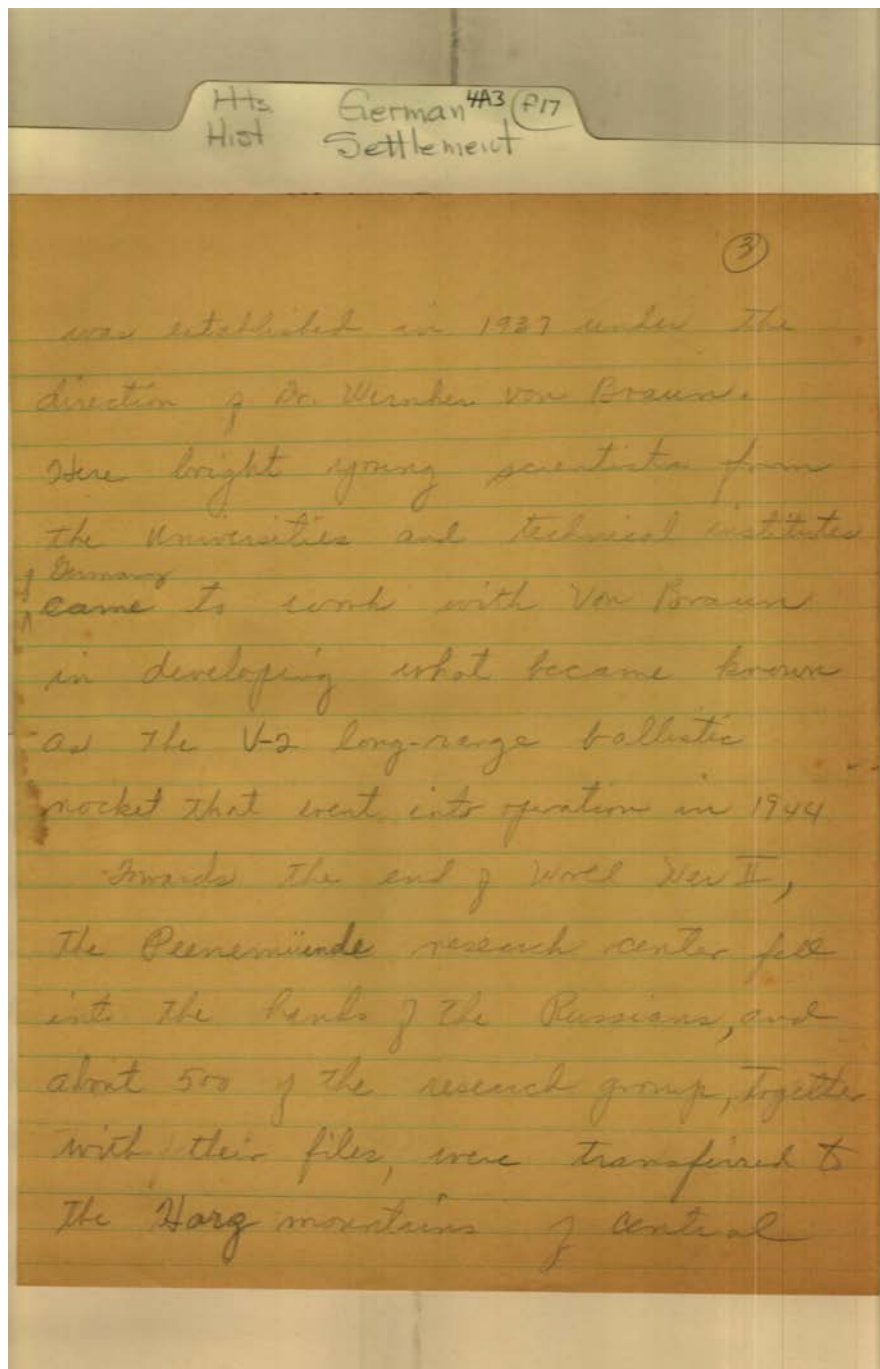
German-born  
Citizens

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay



**Names:**

von Braun, Werner,  
Dr.

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay

Hts  
Hist

German<sup>#43</sup> (P17)  
Settlement

(4)

Germany where the <sup>main</sup> ~~central~~ production plant for missiles was located. Here a "crash" program was continued in an effort to increase the accuracy and dependability of the V-2 rockets. Shortly before the American forces occupied the Harz mountains and interrupted the work on the V-2, most of the research group were taken to an area south of Munich by German SS. troops and were supposed to be eliminated to prevent their capture by Allied troops, <sup>however,</sup> events moved too rapidly

**Names:**

V-2 Rocket

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay

HH3  
Hist German #43 (P17)  
Settlement

(5)

~~to~~ for the Nazi forces to carry out this plan.

On March 15, 1945 orders were received from the SS forces headquarters to move all classified documents relating to guided missile projects to a secret place in <sup>order to</sup> prevent their capture by the enemy. Two members of the Penemunde group, one of whom is working at Redstone today, were assigned the task of carrying out this operation. A nearby mine shaft was used as a storage vault, and the entrance was

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay

Hts  
Hist German #A3 (P17)  
Settlement

(6)

sealed off by blasting.

In spite of this precaution, the United States Army units, that occupied the Wazy Mountains in April of 1945, located the mine and found the hidden boxes of documents. Almost immediately, these papers were shipped to the newly formed Foreign Document Evaluation Branch at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland for translation, evaluation, and cataloging.

Shortly after V-E Day, Colonel H. N. Toftoy (later General Toftoy of Redstone Arsenal) met with emissaries from

**Names:**

Toftoy, H. N.,  
Colonel

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay

HTs  
Hist

German #A3 (P17)  
Settlement

(7)

The Peenemünde scientists, and a meeting between this group and American <sup>and</sup> officials was arranged. They in a small German school house a project known as "Operation Paperclip" was begun. Approximately 150 of the best scientists and technicians were assembled, and after preliminary investigations were made by U.S. intelligence agencies, they were offered five year contracts to come to the United States where they were to be allowed to continue their guided missile research.

**Names:**

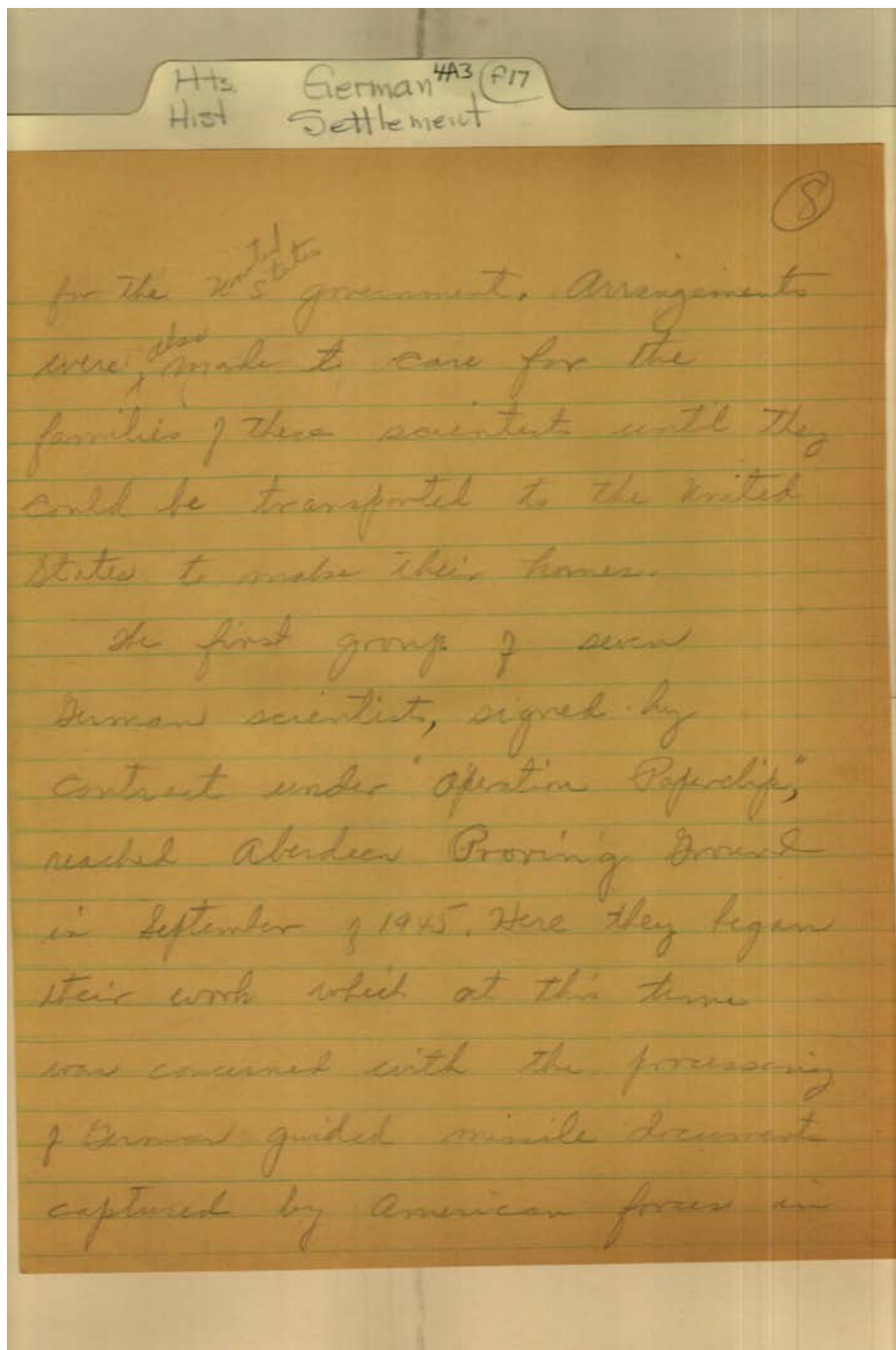
Operation Paperclip

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay



**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay

HHs  
Hist German<sup>4A3</sup> (P17)  
Settlement

(9)

Germany. This valuable information was then sent to Fort Bliss and White Sands Proving Ground to be used in connection with the development of the guided missile programs of the United States. Here 125 of German scientists and technicians had been set to work on the actual development and testing of guided missiles and other ordnance and civilian research projects.

As soon as the project at Aberdeen Proving Ground was completed, these ~~German~~ scientists, who had been connected

**Names:**

Fort Bliss

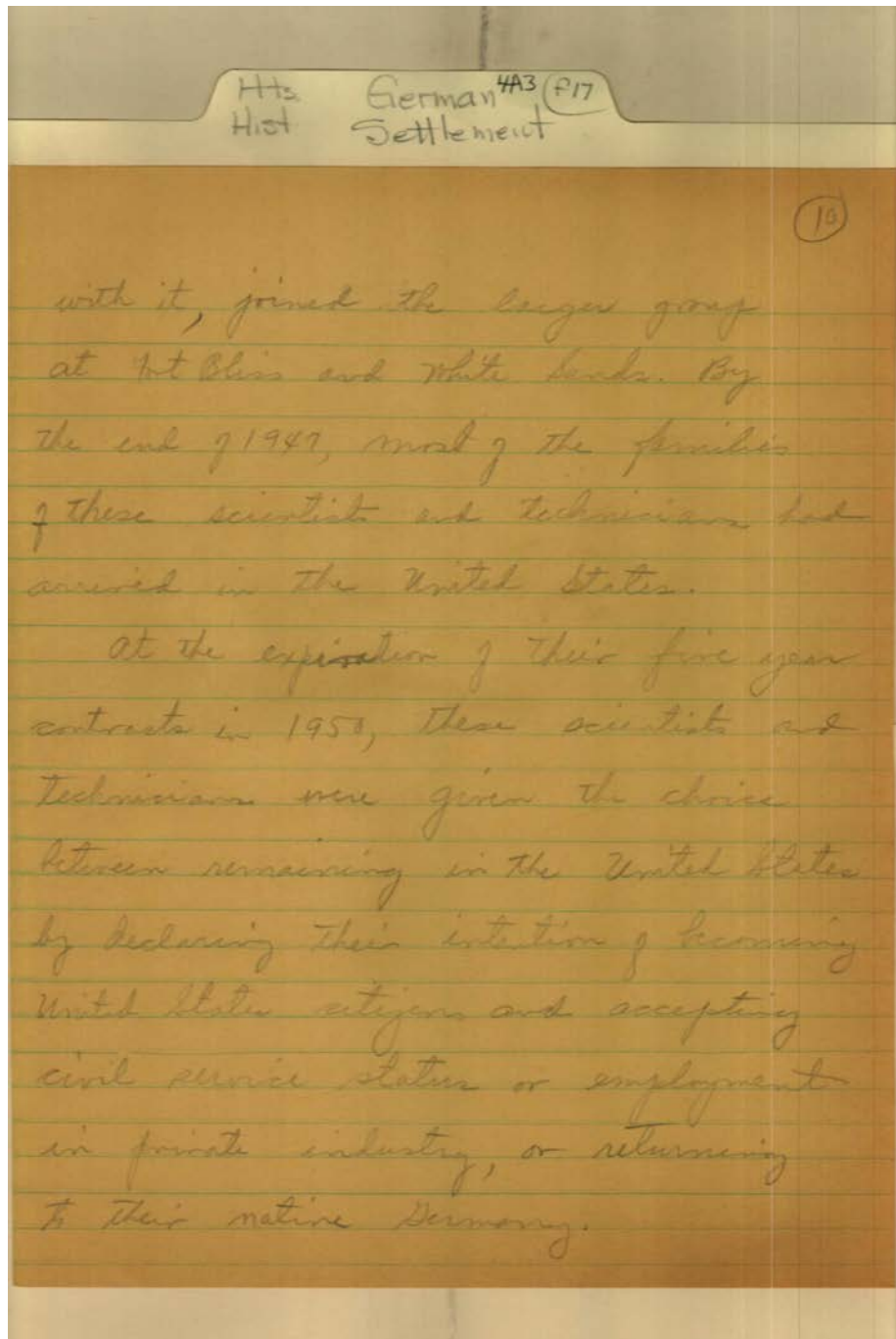
**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay





**Names:**

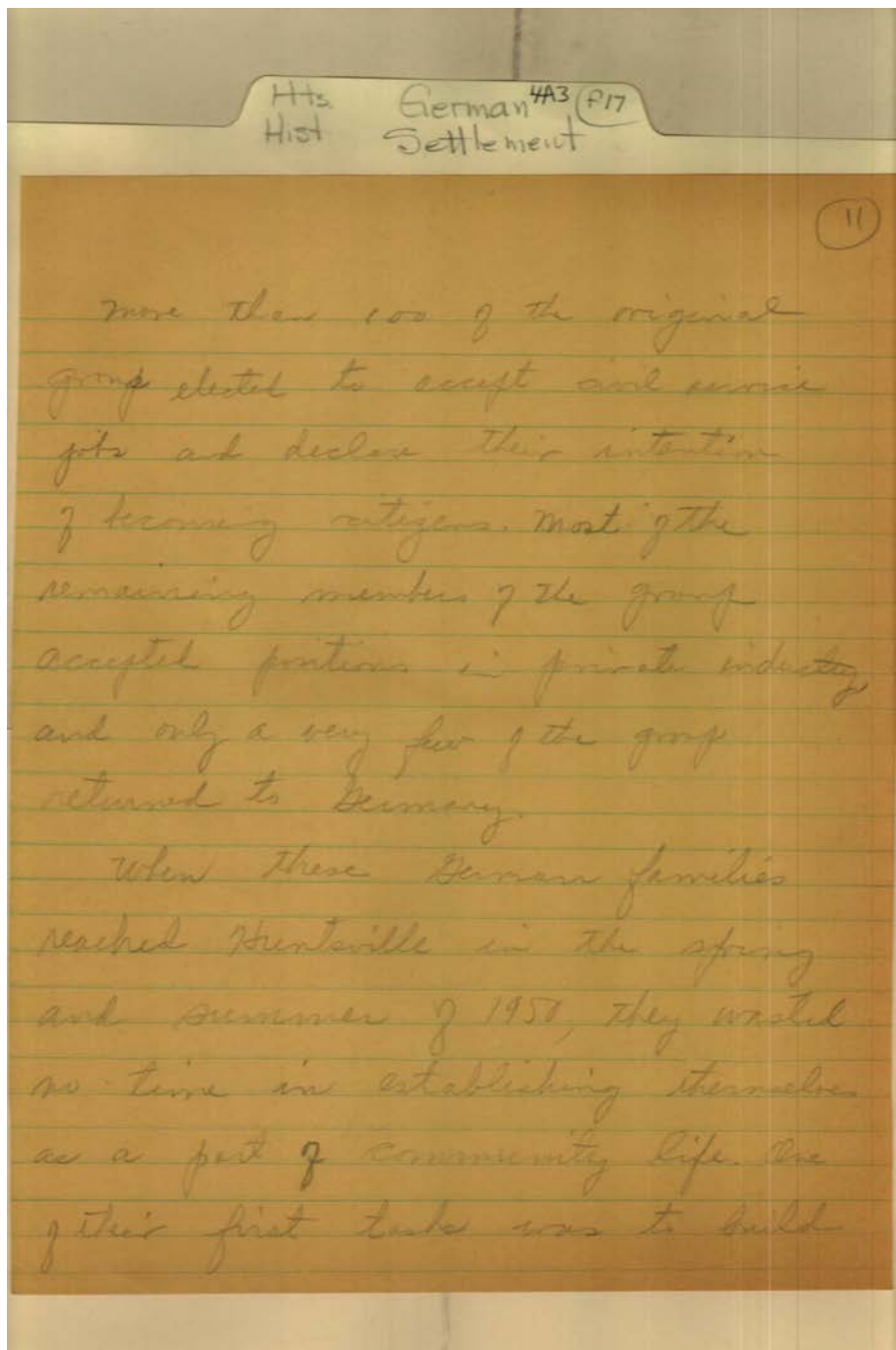
Huntsville, Alabama

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay

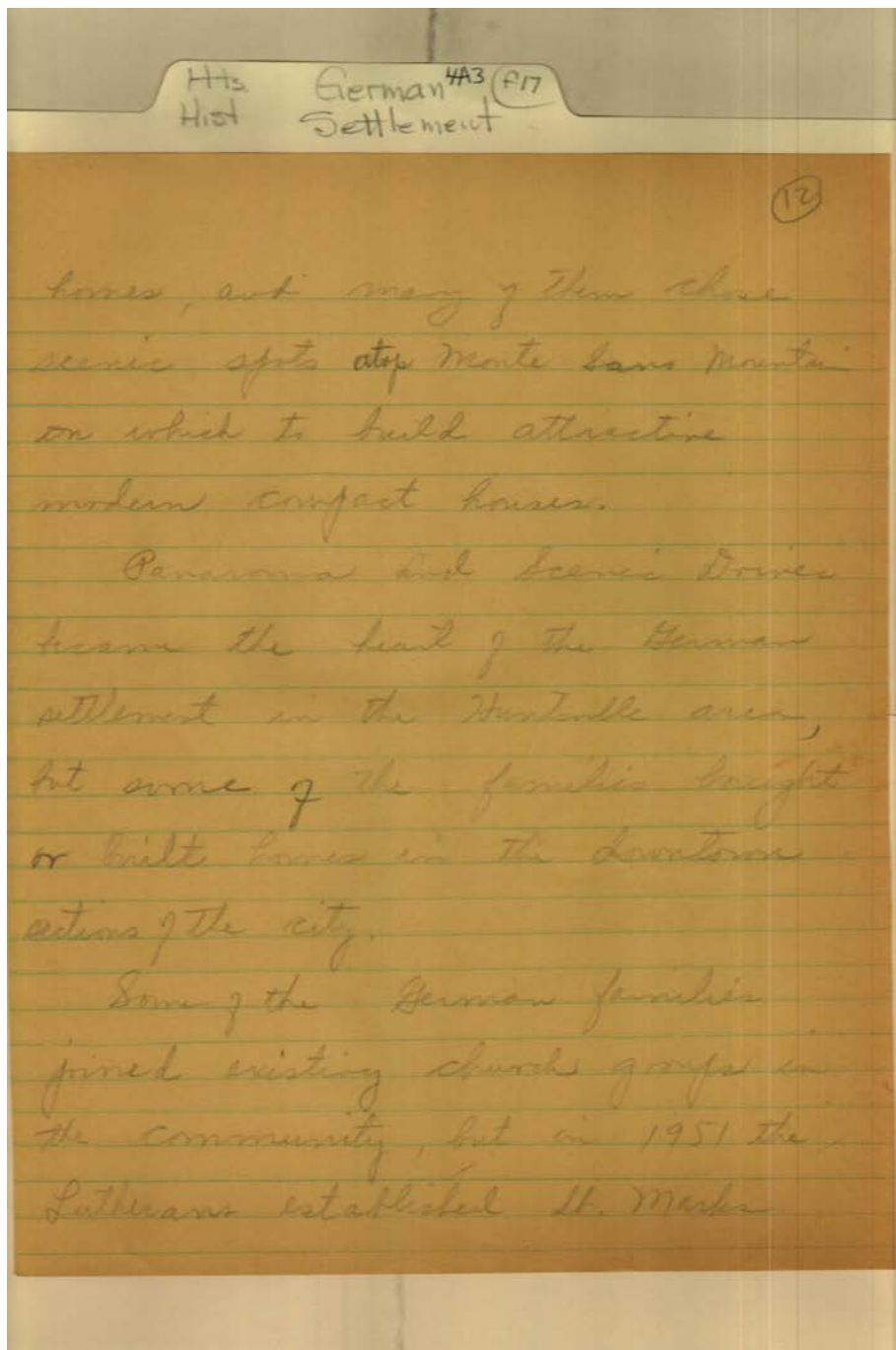


**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay



**Names:**

Monte Sano  
Mountain

St. Marks Lutheran

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL


**Types:**

essay

Hts  
Hist

German #A3 (P17)  
Settlement

(13)

Lutheran Church, the first of this denomination in Huntsville. The Rev. George Hart of the Lutheran Board of Missions became the minister in charge of this congregation of twenty-two members. Within five years the ~~congregation~~<sup>group</sup> numbered 400, and in April 20, 1957 a new \$120,000 modern brick church was dedicated to the glory of God and to the Lutheran work in the community. members of the building committee included  With the expansion of Redstone Arsenal activities in 1950, the population of Huntsville began to grow rapidly and

**Names:**

Hart, George, Rev.

**Places:**

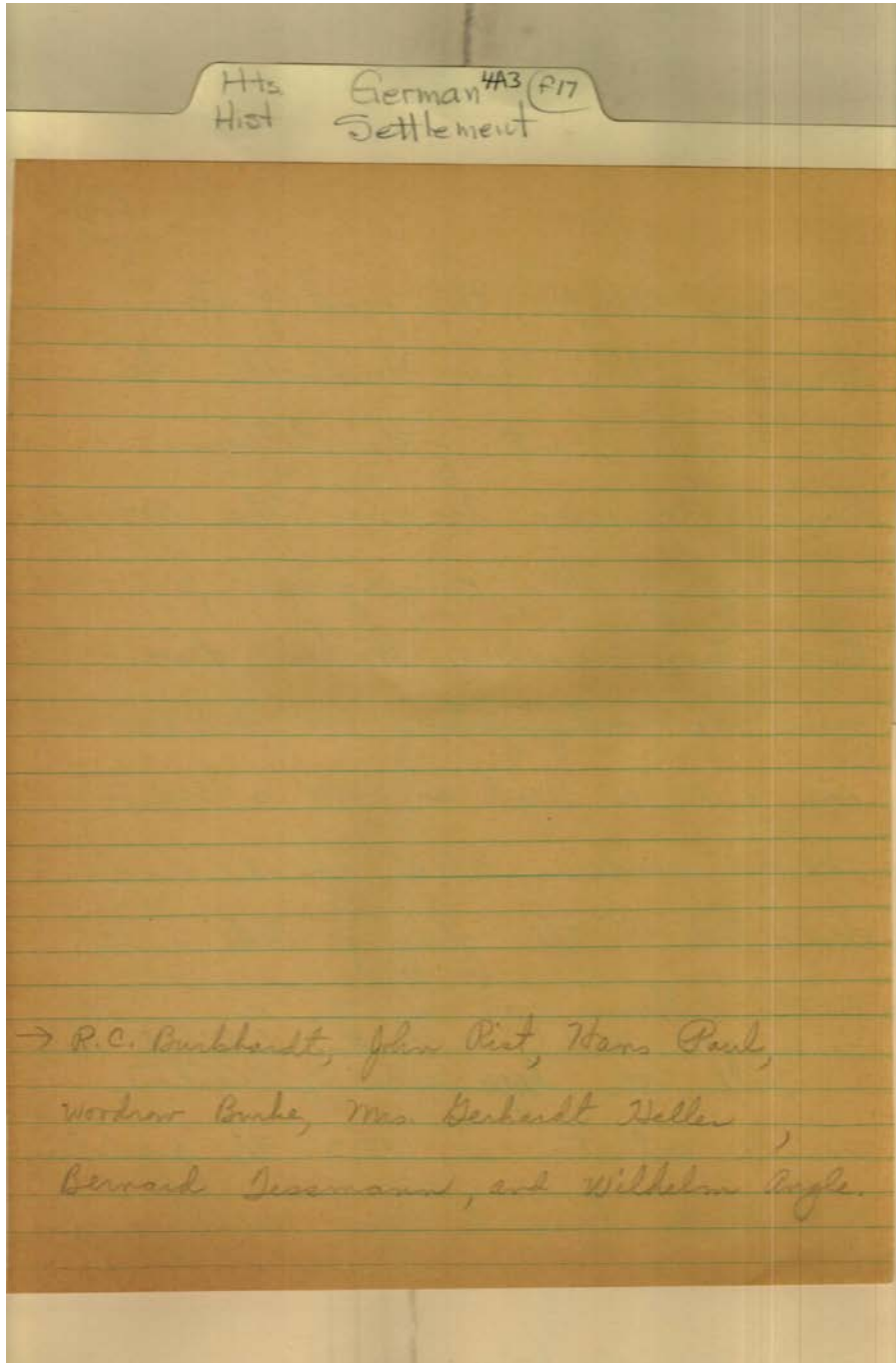
Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay

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**Names:**

Angle, Wilhelm  
Burke, Woodrow

Burkhardt, R. C.  
Heller, Gerhardt, Mrs.

Paul, Hans  
Rist, John

Tessmann, Bernard

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay

Hts  
Hist German<sup>#43</sup> (P17)  
Settlement

(14)

city planning was badly needed  
due to the German group, Hannes  
Luchsen, an architect and master  
planner for Pedastore Arsenal, came  
forward to prepare a through-way  
for Huntsville which would relieve  
the traffic problem and provide  
an area for business expansion.  
By 1956, the Memorial Parkway was  
a reality and shopping centers  
were in operation along this broad  
thoroughfare.  
Luchsen has also worked with  
city officials in preparing a road

**Names:**

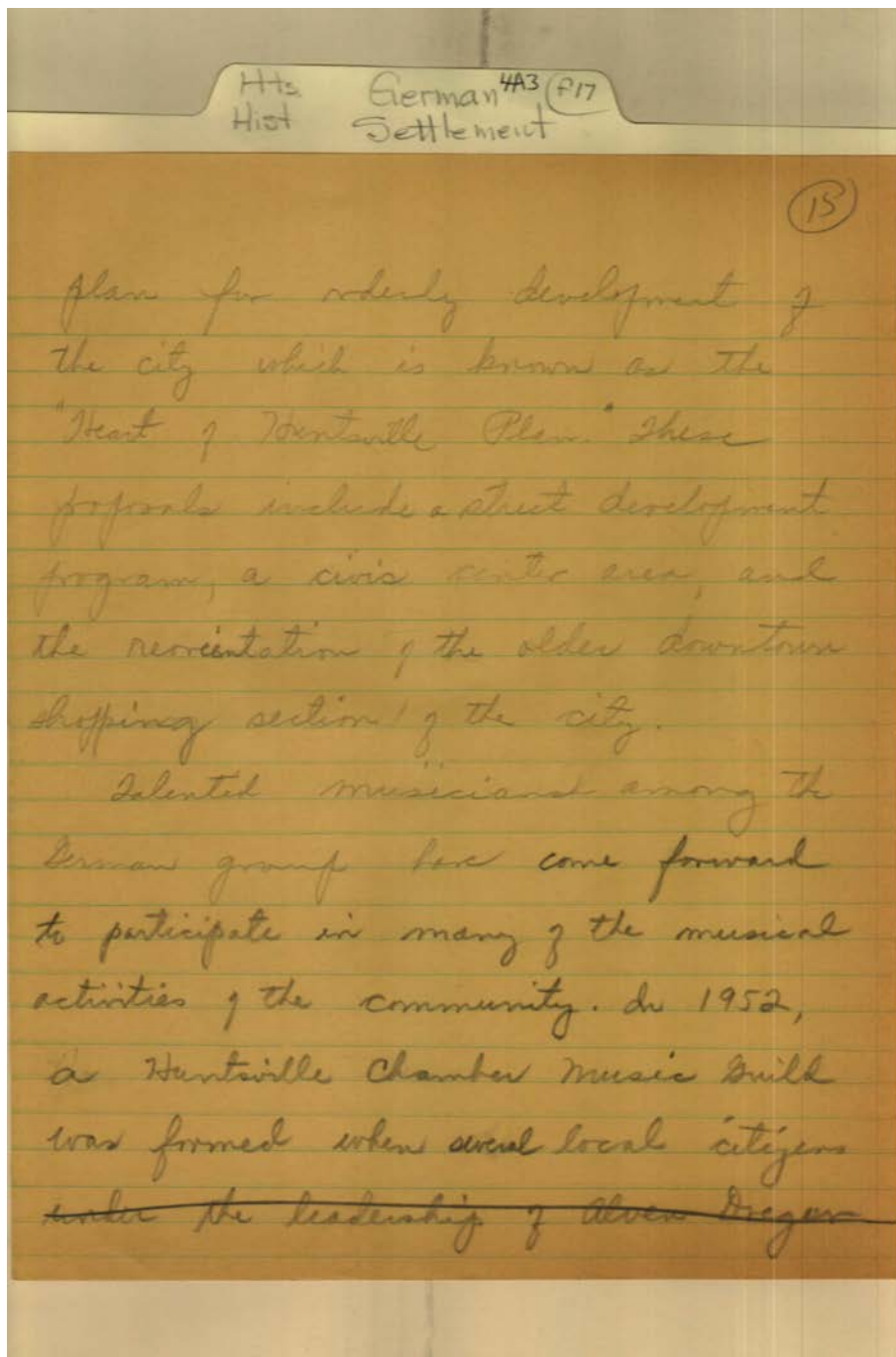
Luchsen, Hannes

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay



**Names:**

Chamber Music  
Guild

Heart of Huntsville  
Plan

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay

HH3  
Hist German #3 (P17)  
Settlement

(16)

and German scientists joined forces to enjoy chamber music as a form of relaxation.

In 1955, when Huntsville's first civic orchestra was organized under the leadership of Alvin Dreger, a local musician and Arthur Fraser, of the Alabama college faculty, many of the German groups came forward to support this endeavor. Werner Kuers, a German-born engineer of the Occaneechee group, became concert master and has remained in this position for the

**Names:**

Alabama College  
Dreger, Alvin

Fraser, Arthur  
Kuers, Werner

Orchestra, First Civic

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay

**Dates:**

1955



Hts  
Hist

German<sup>4A3</sup> (P17)  
Settlement

(17)

past five years. Dr. Eberhardt Rees,  
chief deputy to Tom Brown for many  
years, takes time off from his  
busy schedule to serve of the  
orchestra's board of trustees. In  
fact about one-third of the orchestra  
is made up of German-born  
families who enjoy music as  
a leisure time activity.

For the past four years Walter  
Weisman of the German group, has  
served as president of the Huntsville  
Community Concert Association. Under  
his able administration the

**Names:**

Community Concert  
Assn

Rees, Eberhardt, Dr.  
Weisman, Walter

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay

Hts. German #43 (F17)  
Hist Settlement

(18)

Association has enjoyed four highly successful seasons. Weisman has also been active in Chamber of Commerce projects since his arrival in Huntsville.

In November of 1954 and April of 1955, most of these German families became citizens of the United States. On April 14, 1955 a special session of the Northern District Federal Court <sup>at Huntsville</sup> was held in Huntsville in order that 110 foreign born residents of Huntsville might receive their citizenship in their chosen "home town."

**Names:**

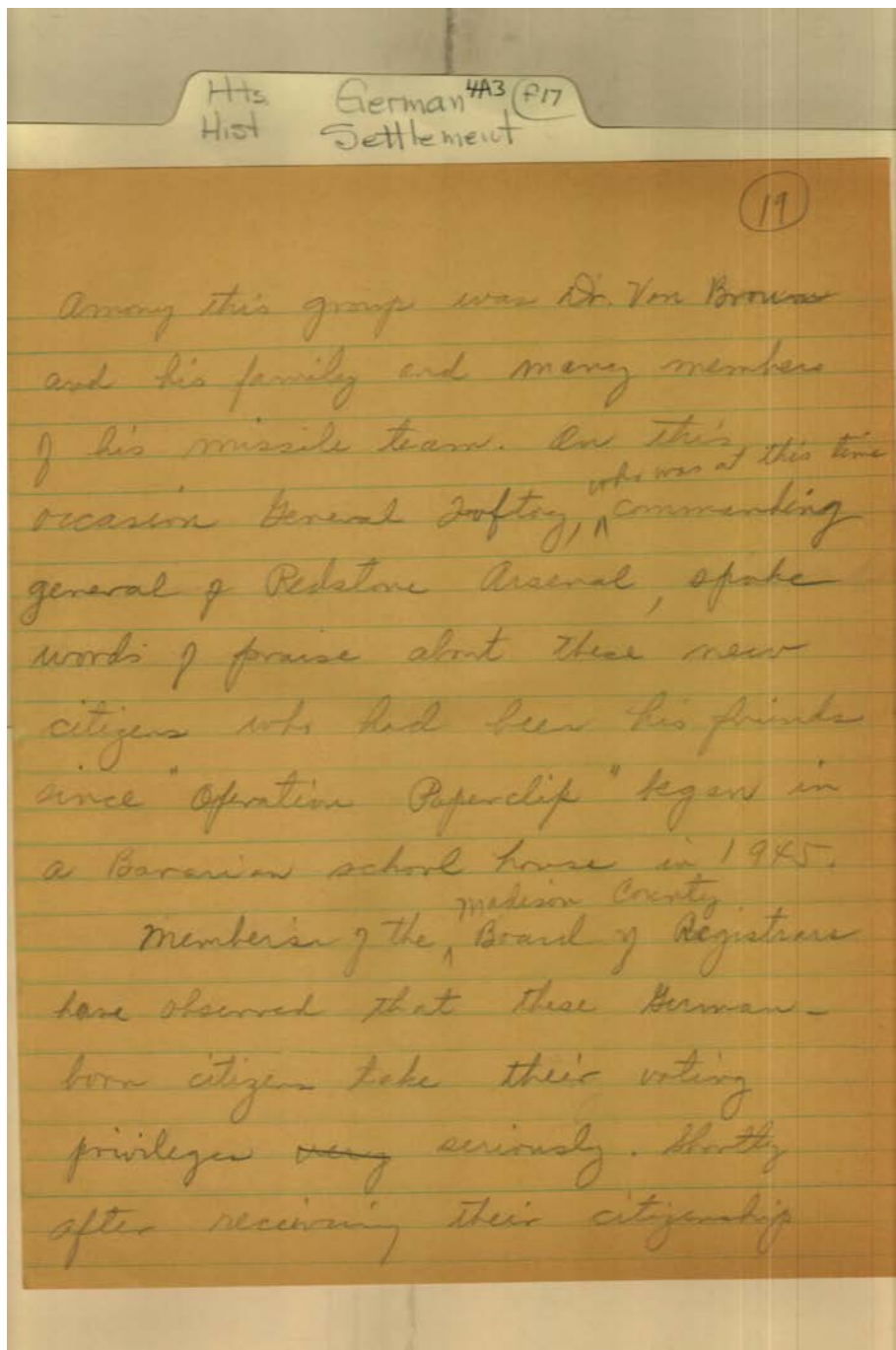
Citizenship  
accomplished

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay



**Names:**

Board of Registrars

Redstone Arsenal

Toftoy, General

von Braun,

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay

Hts  
Hist German #A3 (F17)  
Settlement

(25)

The men in these families go through the process of registration. Later they bring their wives to register and carefully supervise them as they fill out the registration forms. Election day is an important time for the family unit because the adult members come as a group to cast their ballots. After the children are brought along to observe the procedure so that they too can become informed on voting matters.

Shortly after coming to Huntsville about fifteen of the German families

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay

Hts  
Hist German #43 (F17)  
Settlement

(2)

joined the Current Affairs Seminar,  
a discussion group organized for the  
purpose of letting interested persons  
exchange their views on current  
issues. Karl Heinberg, head of test  
firing on von Braun's team, was  
an active member of the seminar advisory  
committee for a number of years.  
Two of these families, the Wilhelm Angeles  
and the Friedrich Duerr  
have remained active in this group  
for the past ten years.  
Because of their training in  
the sciences and languages, many

**Names:**

Angel, Wilhelm

Duerr, Friedrich

Heinberg, Karl

von Braun,

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay

Hts German #43 (P17)  
Hist Settlement

(22)

of these German-born citizens give  
of their time as teachers in the  
graduate and undergraduate  
divisions of the University of Alabama's  
Educational Center in Huntsville. At the  
present time Mrs. Gerhard Heller  
teaches German and Mr. Heinrich Beckert  
teaches Russian in the undergraduate  
field, and six scientists are employed  
as instructors in the graduate  
program.

The Rocket City Astronomical  
Association began as an informal  
group meeting at the home of Dr.

**Names:**

Astronomical  
Association

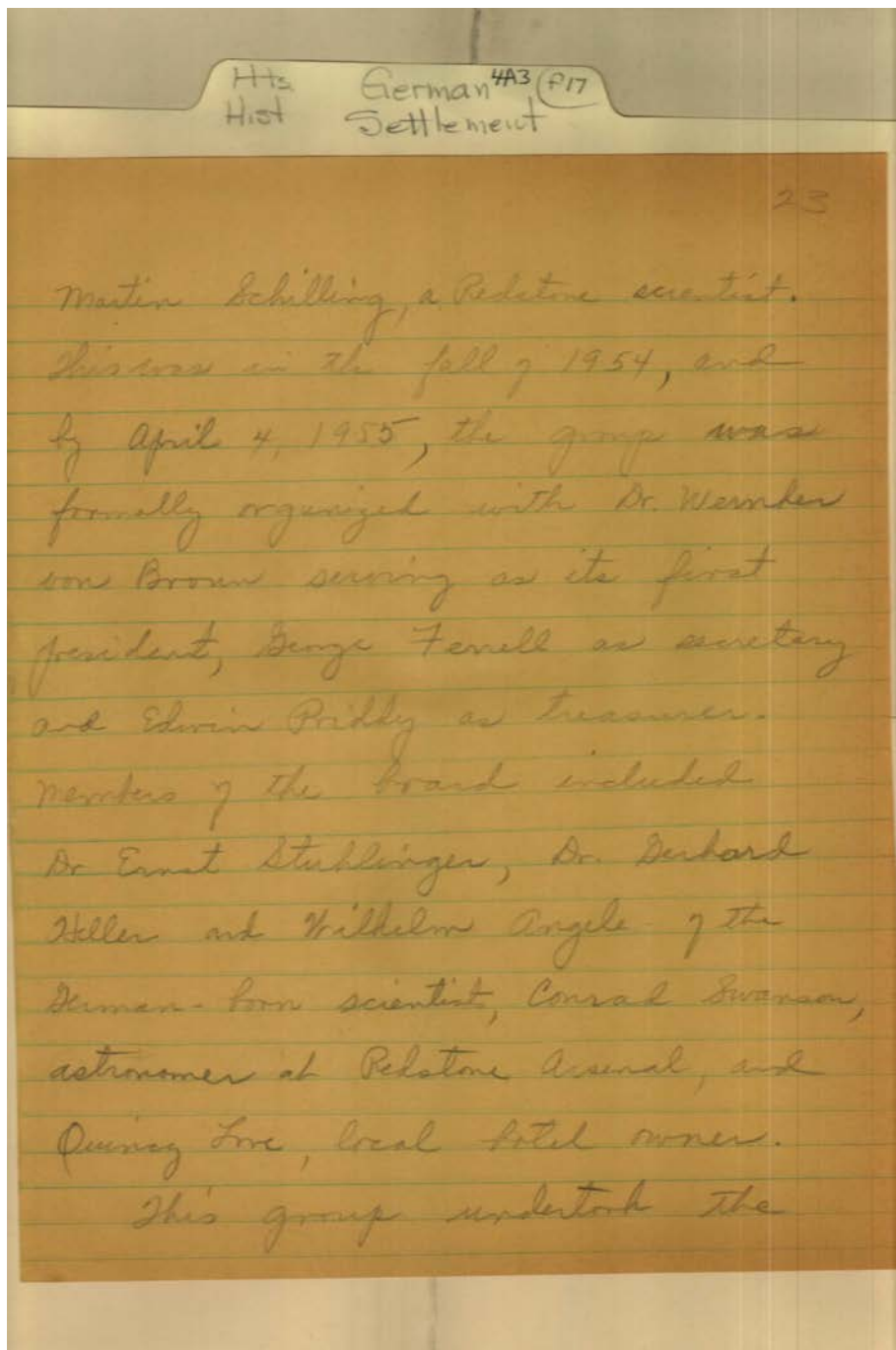
Beckert, Heinrich  
Heller, Gerhard, Mrs.

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay



**Names:**

Angel, Wilhelm  
Ferrell, George  
Heller, Gerhard, Dr.

Love, Quincy  
Priddy, Edwin  
Schilling, Martin

Stuhlinger, Ernst, Dr.  
Swanson, Conrad  
von Braun, Wernher

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay

Hts  
Hist German #43 (P17)  
Settlement

24

construction of an observatory on top  
of Monte Sano, a project which was  
completed by 1957. They also sponsored  
the publication of a <sup>magazine</sup> space journal, <sup>collected the</sup>  
the first issue of which were  
put on the news stands on June 26, 1957.  
A group of young technical writers  
at Redstone including William Isbell,  
Ralph Jennings, and James Daniel  
edit the publication which is actively  
supported by the leaders of the  
guided missile team. Among those  
who have contributed articles to  
the quarterly publication of the

**Names:**

Daniel, James

Isbell, William

Jennings, Ralph

Space Journal

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

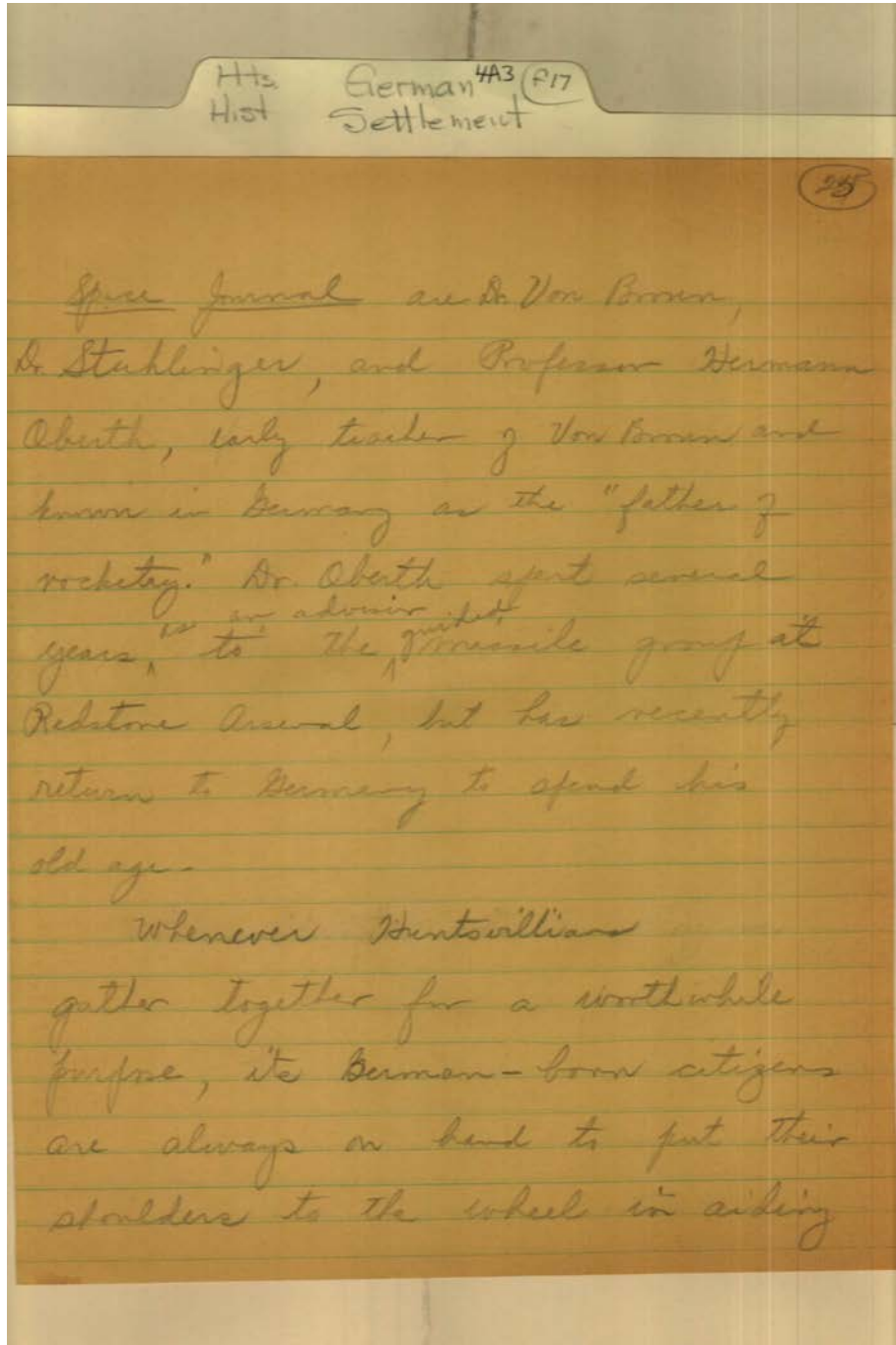
**Types:**

essay

**Dates:**

Jun 26, 1957





**Names:**

Oberth, Hermann,  
Prof.

Stuhlinger, Dr.  
Space Journal

von Braun, Dr.

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay

Hts  
Hist German #A3 (F17)  
Settlement

2p

the progress of the community.  
In December of 1957, the citizens  
of Huntsville formally recognized the  
efforts of this group by awarding  
to its leader, Dr. Werner von Braun,  
Huntsville's Distinguished Citizen Award.  
Though the award was made  
directly to von Braun on behalf  
of the citizens of Huntsville, Charles  
Shaver, who made the presentation,  
indicated that the whole German-  
born group was really being  
recognized at this time. Speaking of von  
Braun he said, "As a citizen of

**Names:**

Distinguished Citizen  
Award

Shaver, Charles

von Braun, Wernher,  
Dr.

**Places:**

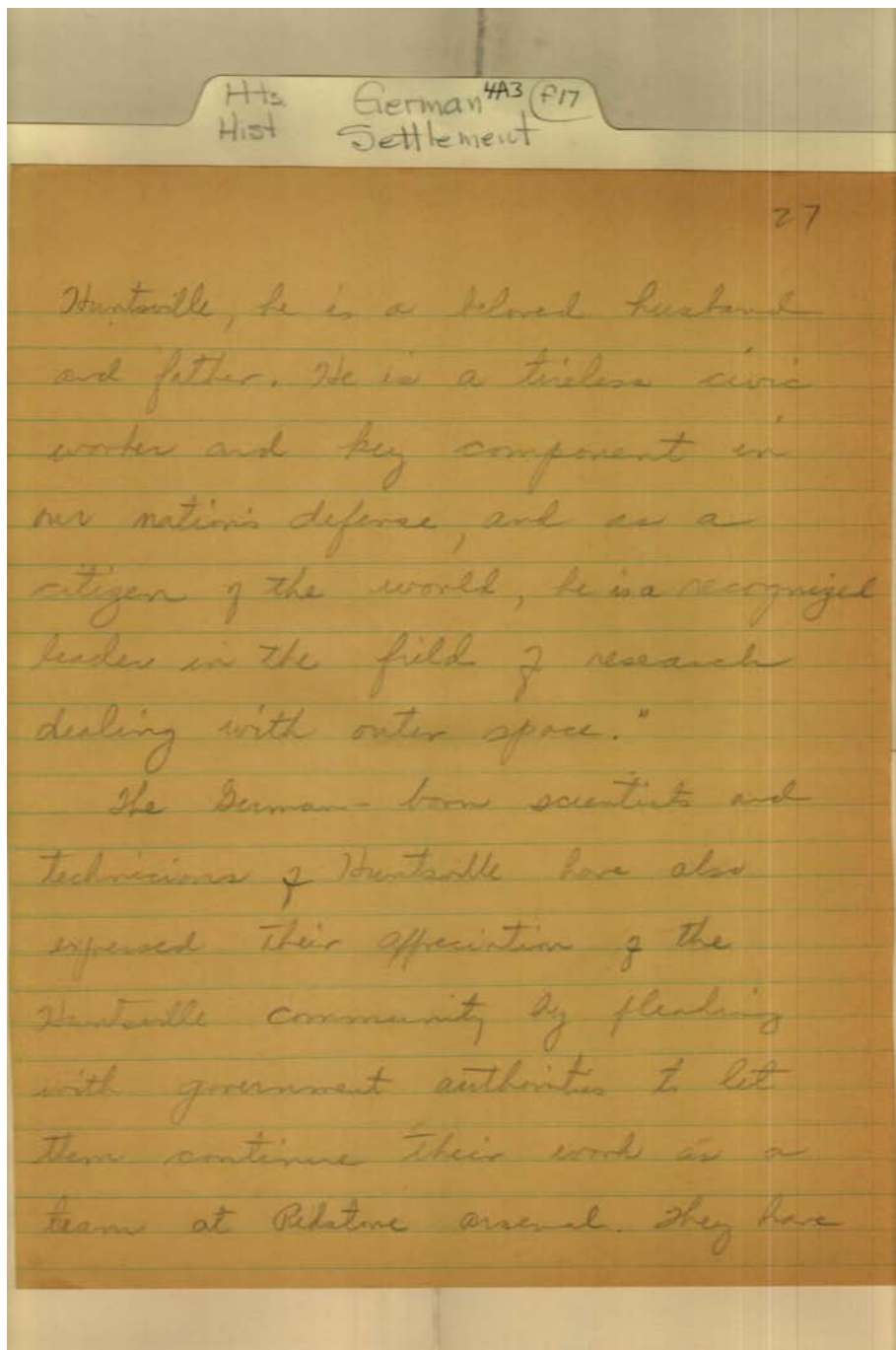
Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay

**Dates:**

Dec 1957

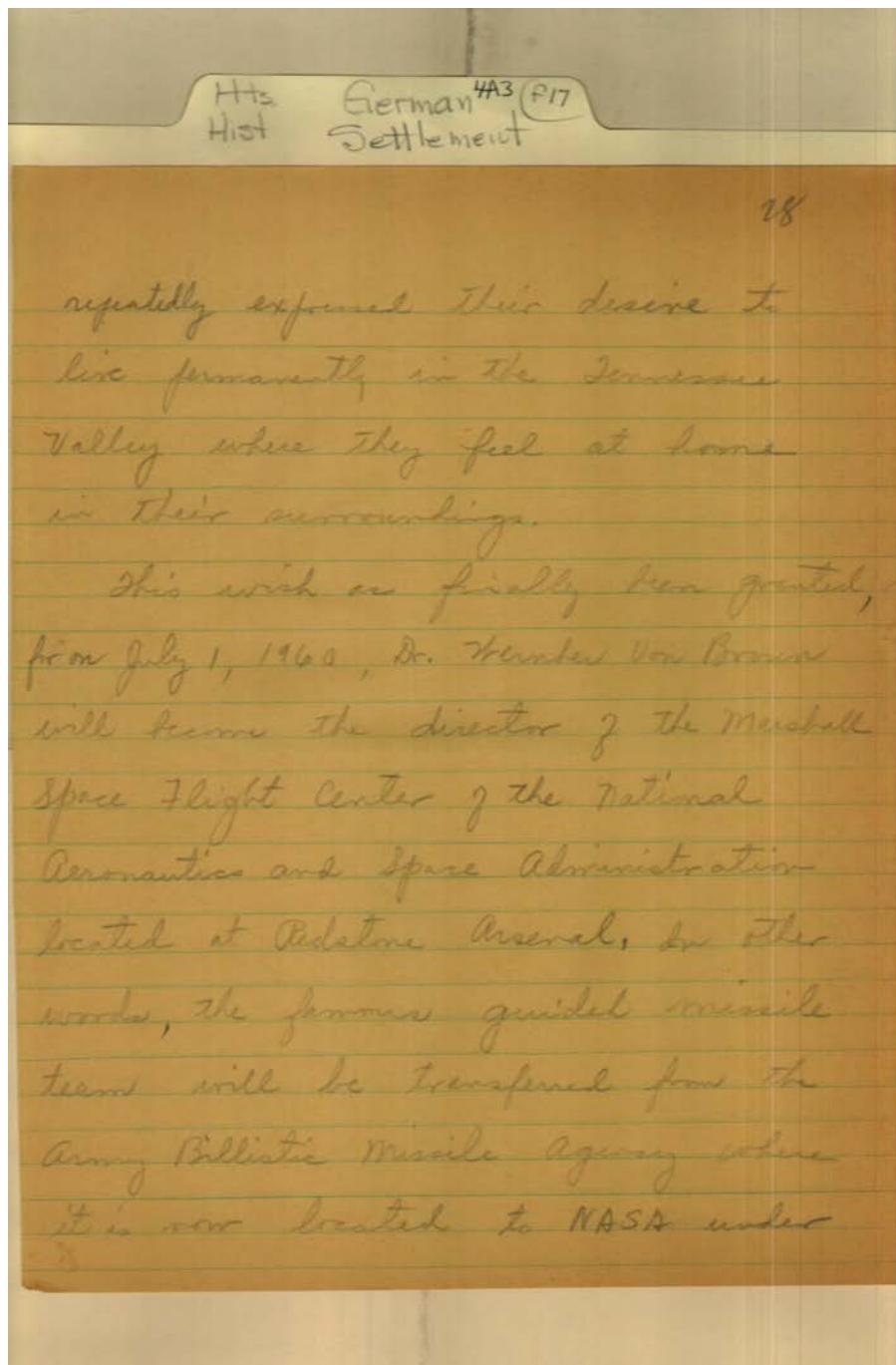


**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay



**Names:**

Marshall Space Flight  
Center

NASA  
Redstone Arsenal

von Braun, Wernher,  
Dr.

**Places:**

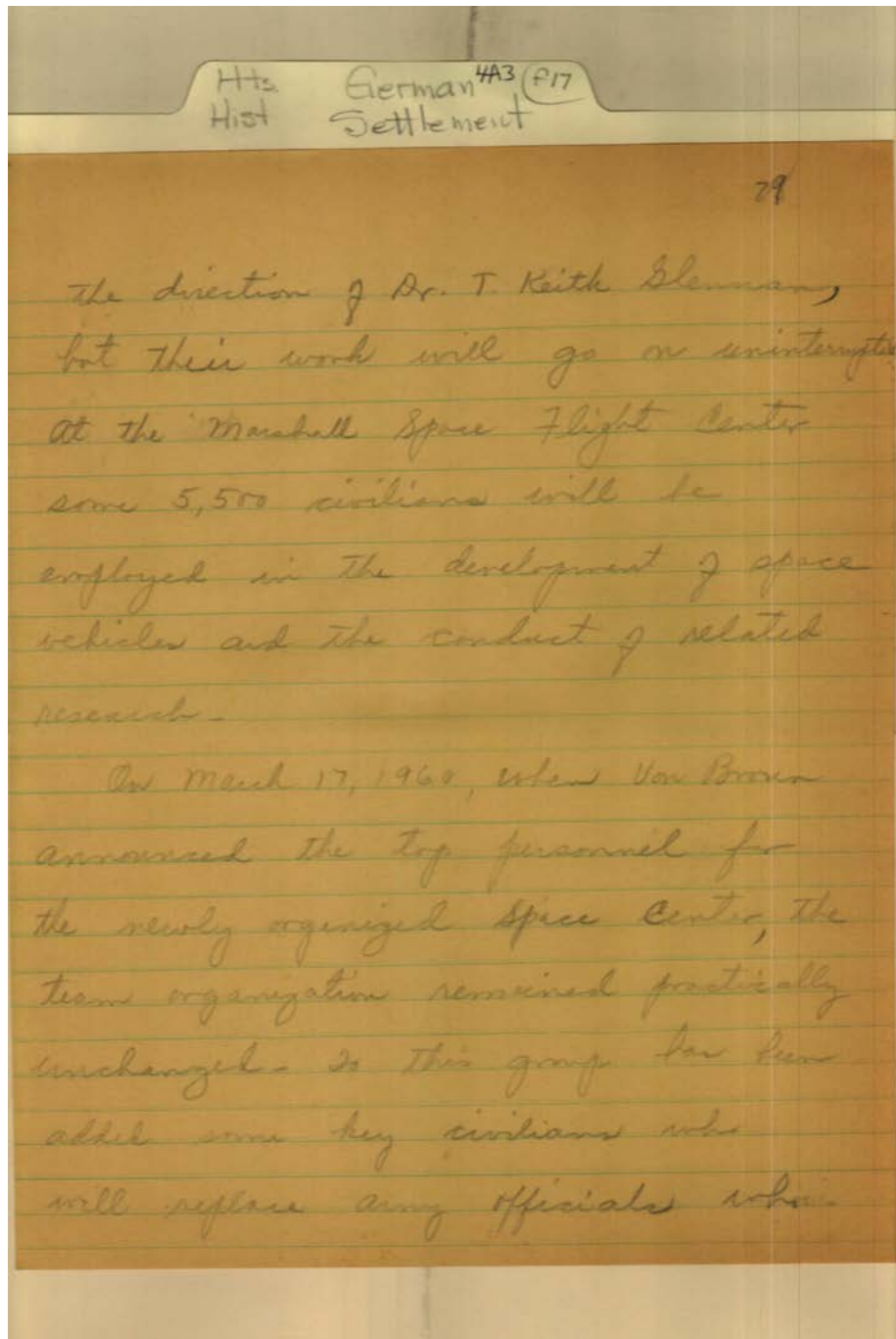
Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay

**Dates:**

Jul 01, 1960



**Names:**

Glennan, T. Keith, Dr.

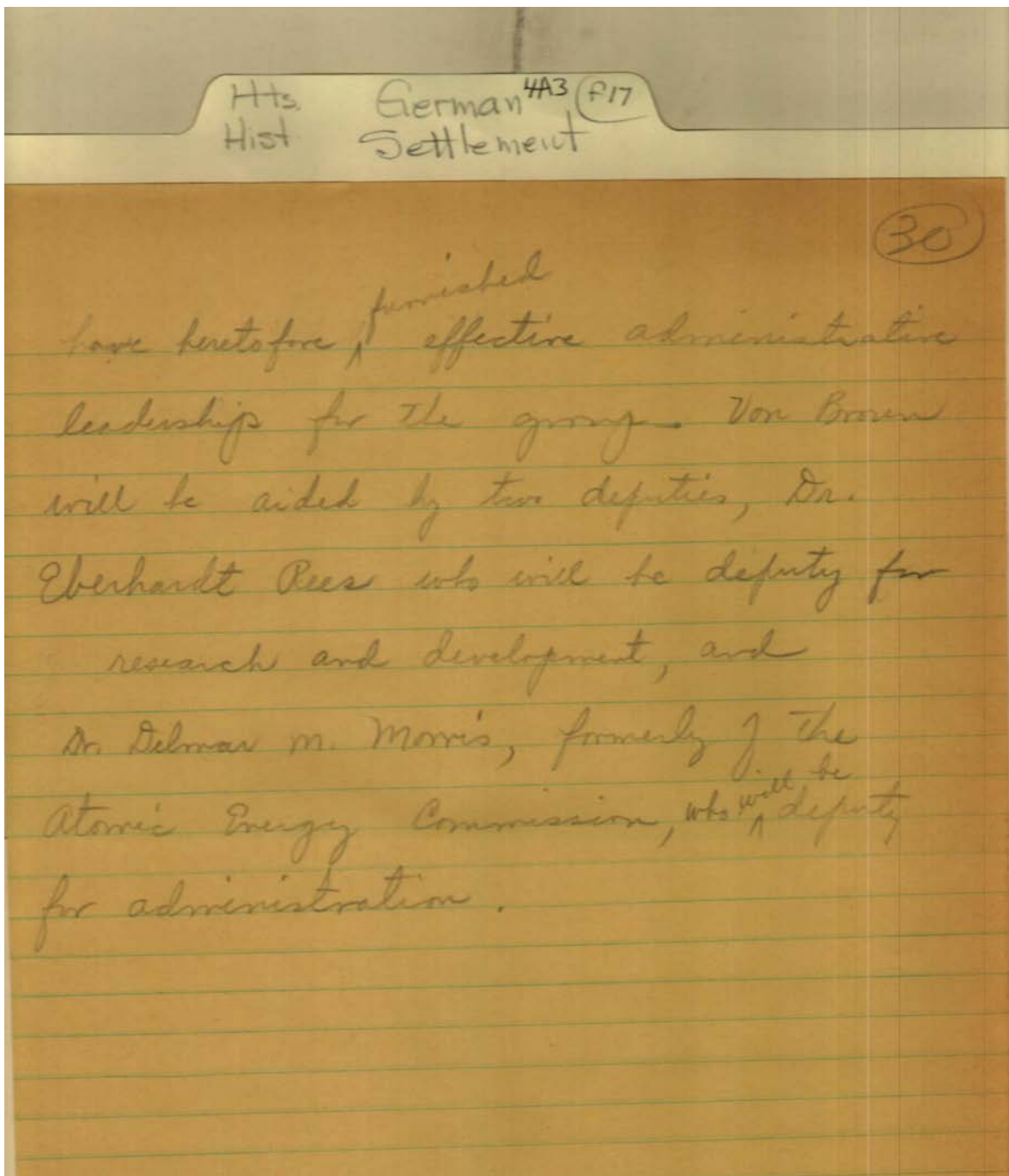
Marshall Space Flight  
Center

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay



**Names:**

Atomic Energy  
Commission

Morris, Delmar M.,  
Dr.

Rees, Eberhardt, Dr.  
von Braun,

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay

Hts  
Hist German #A3 (P17)  
Settlement

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~~The records and development organizational~~  
~~units will continue practically unchanged.~~

Laboratory directors and their assignments include:

Dr. E. D. Geissler - aeroballistics;  
Dr. Helmut Hoelzer - computations;  
Hans Mans, - fabrication and assembly engineering;  
Dr. Walter Haeusserman - guidance and control;  
Dr. Kurt Debus - missile firing;  
Dr. Ernst Stuhlinger - research projects;  
W. A. Mragek - structures and mechanics;  
E. W. Neubert - systems analysis and reliability;  
Hans Hueter - systems support equipment

**Names:**

Debus, Kurt, Dr.  
Geissler, E. D., Dr.

Haeusserman, Walter,  
Dr.  
Hoelzer, Helmut, Dr.

Hueter, Hans  
Laboratory Directors  
Mans, Hans

Mragek, W. A.  
Neubert, E. W.  
Stuhlinger, Ernst, Dr.

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay

Hts  
Hist German<sup>4A3</sup> (P17)  
Settlement

32

and director of the Agema B and  
Center projects; and  
Karl Heinburg - test firing.

Chiefs of staff and project officers will:  
be:

H. H. Koeller - future projects;  
Dr. O. H. Lange - Saturn Systems;  
George Constan - technical program coordinating;  
David Newby - technical services;  
Victor Sorensen - personnel and management  
services;  
Arthur Sanderson - personnel director; and  
Keith Wible - secretary.

~~Saturn Program, Saturn fund threat  
mobile firing in the Mercury~~

**Names:**

Constan, George  
Heinburg, Karl

Koeller, H. H.  
Lange, O. H., Dr.

Newby, David  
Sanderson, Arthur

Sorensen, Victor  
Wible, Keith

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay



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Wible, Keith [32](#)

# Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection

**Preferred Citation:** Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection, Archives and Special Collections, M. Louis Salmon Library, University of Alabama in Huntsville, Huntsville, AL.

**Collection Scope and Content:** The Collection of 114 Linear ft. includes a total of 156 Archival Boxes. The Frances Cabaniss Roberts collection covers the historical records of the Cabaniss Roberts family. This collection contains extensive correspondence records of the Cabaniss Roberts family circa 1830 to 1930.

**Archives/Special Collections Access Restrictions:** None

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**Provenance:** Gift of Johanna Shields on October 28, 2006.



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ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

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M. Louis Salmon Library**