

The Osterwald Collection (in: *Historische Bürowelt*, 100, July 2015, pp.23-28) by Jos Legrand

Congratulating the IFHB with their 100th HBw-magazine is actually congratulating collectors, and how about giving them a better gift rather than a small contribution about one of the first typewriter collectors ever, Albert Osterwald.

Private typewriter collecting must have begun with the interest of its amazing construction and its functioning from the very beginning, and a childish desire to keep them safe to preserve them, and then to tell everybody about their beauty and importance. Due to the rapid technical innovations models soon became obsolete, these machines were offered to technical societies and museums shortly after. Only a few private collectors took care of them too. Then, and now.

The leading typewriter companies held extensive collections in their plants, to learn from the different constructions and to have the possibility to sue their competitors. Luckily enough some of these factory collections survived the ages.

In pre WWII-Germany only a handful of private collectors are known by name: the Blankertz collection, the collections of Hildebrand and Gatzke, and greatest of them all the collection of Albert Osterwald.

osterwald

It is the *Schreibmaschinen-Zeitung*, Germany's first business magazine about typewriters, that recorded Albert Osterwald as an Underwood agent, selling these typewriters in Chemnitz in 1899. The Underwood was a relatively new and revolutionary brand amidst the American stepchildren from the Union Typewriter Company like Remington, Caligraph or Densmore.



From that time on Osterwald worked his way up from an Underwood agent to the owner of the 'Osterwald Werke Fabrik für Bürobedarf', the Osterwald Works for Stationery, with their headquarters in Leipzig, and branch offices in Berlin, Magdeburg, Chemnitz, Erfurt und Halle ¹. See the head of an invoice from April 1925. The place of business was Leipzig with their factory at the Wittenberger



The advertisement is a vertical rectangular card with a decorative border. On the left side, there is a large illustration of a woman with dark, curly hair, looking slightly to the right. Below her, the word "Ideal" is written in a large, stylized, gothic font. Underneath the word "Ideal", there is a smaller illustration of a typewriter with a sheet of paper coming out of it. The paper has the word "Ideal" and some smaller text on it. Below the typewriter, the text "Seidel & Naumann DRESDEN." is printed. On the right side of the card, the word "Stenogramm-" is written in a large, stylized font, followed by "heft" in a smaller font. Below this, there are several lines of text: "Nr." followed by a blank space, "vom" followed by a blank space, "bis" followed by a blank space, "Ihrer werten Kundschaft gewidmet", "von der Firma", "Albert Osterwald", "Magdeburg", "Breiteweg 77 78, Telephon 1041.", "Allein=Vertretung", "der deutschen", "Schreibmaschine", and "Ideal" in a large, stylized font. The entire advertisement is framed by a double-line border.

Stenogramm-
heft

Nr.

vom bis

Ihrer werten Kundschaft
gewidmet
von der Firma

Albert Osterwald
Magdeburg
Breiteweg 77 78, Telephon 1041.

Allein=Vertretung
der deutschen
Schreibmaschine

Ideal

Naumanns



Osterwald

DOPPELSPULEN-FARBAND

Gegenüber
der Siegesäule

Albert Osterwald G.m.b.H. Nachf.
Chemnitz, Theaterstraße 30 a



Farbbänder 16 mm, viol. kop. für Ideal". 0.10 postal charges had to be added.

Osterwald Werke Fabrik für Bürobedarf

ALBERT OSTERWALD

Erzeugnisse: Büromöbel / Geschäftsbücher / Briefablage- und Karteleinrichtungen / Geschäfts- und Werbedrucksachen

Alleinvertreib der Ideal- und Erika-Schreibmaschine

Fabrik: Wittenberger Straße 6, Fernsprecher Sammelnummer 72781 / Stadtgeschäft: Goethestraße 1 (Augustumplatz), Fernsprecher 20287, 19764
Telegraphen-Adresse: Osterwaldwerke Leipzig / Postfach-Konto: Leipzig 5159 / Bank-Konto: Allgemeine Deutsche Credit-Anstalt, Leipzig



Zweigniederlassungen:
Berlin W66, Magdeburg, Chemnitz,
Erfurt, Halle a. S.

LEIPZIG

Wittenberger Straße 6

den 16. April 1925

Firma

Auftrags-Befähigung

Vereinigte Porphy-Brücke auf dem Rochlitzer Berge,



Fernruf: 333
Telegraphen-Adresse:
Osterwaldwerke Chemnitz

Bankkonto:
Allgemeine Deutsche Credit-Anstalt,
Filiale Chemnitz
Postfachkonto: Leipzig Nr. 53030
Bank für Konten:
Direktion der Reichsbank-Gesellschaft
Filiale Chemnitz

Osterwald Werke Fabrik für Bürobedarf

ALBERT OSTERWALD G.m.b.H.

Erzeugnisse: Büromöbel / Geschäftsbücher / Briefablage- u. Karteleinrichtungen / Geschäfts- u. Werbedrucksachen

Alleinvertreib der Ideal- und Erika-Schreibmaschine

CHEMNITZ

RECHNUNG 7033

den 18. Oktober 1926.

Firma

Louis Winkler,
Kaisersberg-Fabrik,

Abteilung:

Rechnungsbüro

Bestellt durch: Karte.



Auf Rechnung und Gefahr empfangen Sie laut Auftrag
Nr. 4541 vom 16.10.26 durch Nachzahlung:

An:

2 Stück Osterwald-Turbbänder 16 mm,
viel. kop. für Ideal,

+ Porto

Gek. 2.—

4.—

"

—10

Gek. 1.—

4.10

— 12

Rein netto Kassae!

4.10

4.10

ang. am 19.10.26
für Rechnung

Dr. 300

Erstausgabe und Gerichtsstand: Chemnitz

Zähler innerhalb 5 Tagen nach Rechnungsdatum gegen vorläufige Kasse; bei Zahlungsverzug werden als Verzugszinsen die üblichen Bankzinsen berechnet.
Verzugszinsen sind nur innerhalb 5 Tagen nach Erhalt der Ware zahlungsfähig. Mit unserem Siegel sehr frühzeitig zurückgesandte Kisten werden zur Hälfte gelassen.

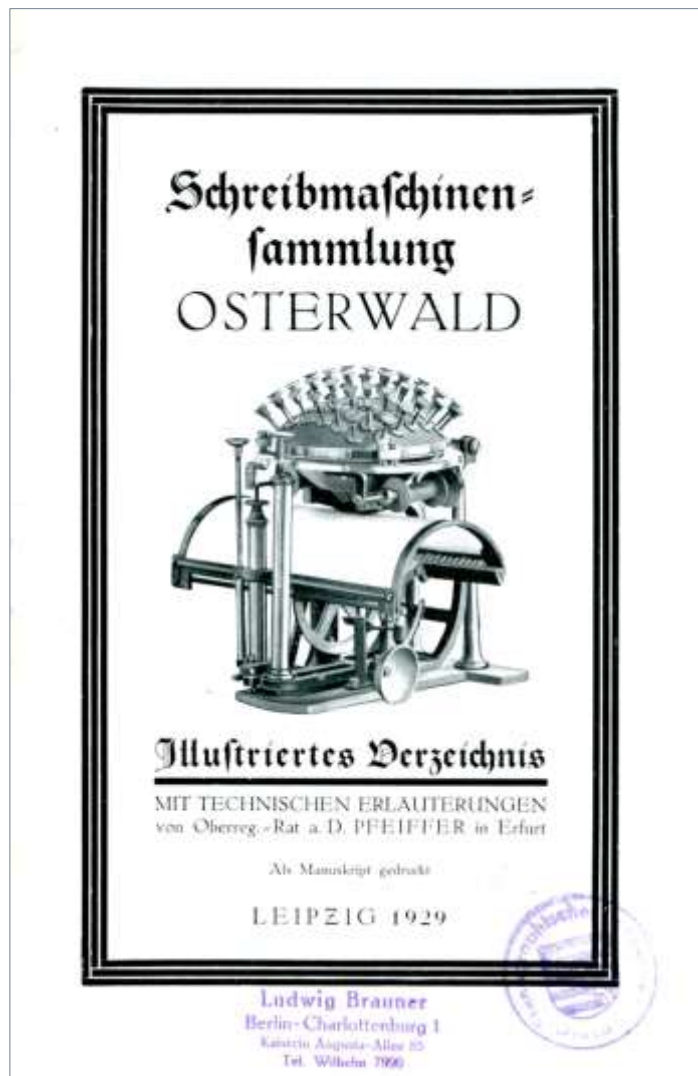
collection

Albert Osterwald was one of those typewriter traders who got fascinated by his own trade and became addicted, and began to collect. How and when that started we do not know. However, an indication is given by Ludwig Brauner in an article in *Das Geschäft* in 1925 in which he stated that the collection began 'mehrere Jahre vor dem Kriege', several years before the war ². A date in the second half of the 1900s is realistic.

Osterwald was interested in theory too. In 1912 he is mentioned as a member of the *Deutscher Buchgewerbeverein*, the German Book Trade Association, that had a magazine called 'Archiv für Buchgewerbe'. He might have organized courses for which real typewriters could have acted as live historical examples, a practice that became common in the business schools in later years. Around 1916 he published a methodical course for one handed typing ³. He also wrote an article about the history of the typewriter ⁴.

Brauner wrote that the Osterwald collection included about 120 typewriters. Four years later 104 machines were listed in what might be the first typewriter collection catalogue ever: 'Schreibmaschinen-Sammlung Osterwald, Illustriertes Verzeichnis, mit technischen Erläuterungen von Oberreg.-Rat a. D. Pfeiffer in Erfurt', a typewriter collection, illustrated, and with comments by D. Pfeiffer. Pfeiffer had already a reputation as a connoisseur because of his article 'The Typewriter before 1900' from 1923.

The Osterwald collection is the oldest private collection that I know of. Brauner praised the completeness of the Remington models in it, among which 'vorzüglich erhaltenen Exemplare der sogenannten Sholes-Glidden', splendidly conserved Sholes & Gliddens. Then there were "almost all first models from the popular brands in their times, but beside that the nowadays often strange looking models with absurd constructions."



In case your fantasy is getting the better of the real facts, the catalogue brings it all back to normal proportions. Yes, four Sholes & Gliddens and one parts machine, which is even astonishing today. A lot of American typewriters were present, and most of the English machines too. There was a Writing Ball. The German brands were a small minority in the collection, maybe not 'old' enough, and too close to standard typewriters. Although the collection had an general high quality of



American upstroke machines, it is the English machines for which you take your hat off: Maskelyne, Waverley, English, North, Salter. There is a list at the end of this article.

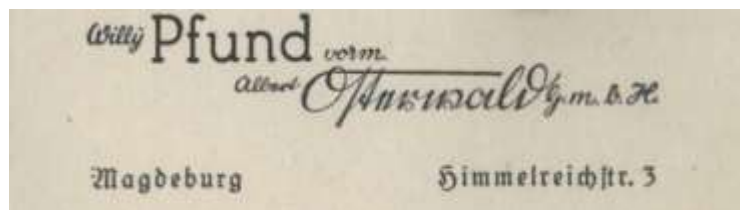
From April 30 till May 9, 1925 Osterwald's typewriter collection was exhibited in the Ausstellungshallen at the Kaiserdamm in Berlin as a part of a large exhibition of antique office material. The collection could also be seen for four months at the cultural historical department of the Pressa, the International Press Exhibition in Cologne in 1928 ⁵. The photo that is pictured at the end of this article could have been taken at one of those opportunities, and if not and most probably not ⁶, then it certainly shows Osterwald's machines. On the foreground two of his Sholes & Gliddens can be seen, in the background at the extreme left the rare Niagara from his collection.

rise and fall

The first time that Osterwald could be traced in the Leipzig address books is in the one from 1900. He was registered at several addresses since then, and these were middle-class locations like the König-Johann-Strasse, now Tschaikowskistraße, where he lived at number 27 on the first floor. In 1913 he had moved to the Lortzingstrasse 17 which was no middle-class location anymore. The next residence was at Am Parkteich 3 in 1931, and the store also moved from the Goethestraße to a more attractive location: Markt 2, in the old City Hall.

All of the sudden, it was over and out. The continuously expanding firm was too much for him, the Great Depression was the last of it. *"Far-reaching economic changes had a heavy impact at the whole unit created by him. The impressive business became unraveled"*, Friedrich von Schack wrote in his obituary ⁷. Osterwald had shortly before, according to Von Schack, *"drawn a terminating line between the time that he was fighting in the first rows of our business members and the time that he, hampered by disease and economic concerns, tired, quiet and withdrawn, observantly watched the developments"*. Osterwald died at the age of 61 in February 1932.

One year earlier he had sold his branch in Chemnitz to the house owner and master butcher Bruno Nitsche ⁸. After Osterwald's death his empire was dismantled even further, but his good name survived in at least three firms: - Erich Franke, vormalige Albert Osterwald GmbH in Leipzig - Otto Baum, Albert Osterwald Nachfolger in Erfurt und - Willy Pfund, vorm. Albert Osterwald GmbH in Magdeburg.



In the Addressbook from 1934 the large house 'Am Parkteich' isn't mentioned anymore – there is only a reference to 'Lothringerstraße 41' for the firm Osterwald, for Bertha Osterwald, widow, and for Günther Osterwald, shopkeeper.



Anyway, in 1932 there is, suddenly, Winde, the beer man. Oswald Winde was the director of the Sternburg brewery in Leipzig. In that year he had come into the possession of Osterwald's typewriter collection, which he had received, according to himself, as a substitution for an 'ausgefallene Hypothek', a written off mortgage.

He went to Wanderer-Werke with it, hoping to sell the collection to them for RM 50,000, but went down to RM 30,000, his actual costs according to Winde. Wanderer however, interested in building a collection themselves, declined. They found the price much too high. "*Unsere Auffassung ist, daß RM 15.000.—für die Sammlung schon angelegt werden könnten.*" (in our opinion RM 15,000 could be invested in the collection), comparable to € 60,000 today. In a speech bubble one could read that the price was suggested to Wanderer-Werke by two negotiators, but included a possible acquisition of a Mitterhofer model, either a recently offered original machine, or a replica thereof. Their proposition was disadvised , but in September that year there was a correspondence with Winde again, in which there was talk of Wanderer-Kraftwagen, automobiles, plural. It could have been about no more than two cars given their price, but again, Wanderer-Werke refused with the argument that they relinquished their interest in the Auto Union A.G. until a year ago. Winde's counter-proposal was RM 16,000 plus a Continental Standard typewriter and a Continental portable. We are not informed about the final deal, but fact is that the Osterwald collection passed into that of the Wanderer-Werke.

The Chemnitz company probably didn't know that they had played a very dangerous game. According to Süßenguth 8 the Osterwald collection was offered to the Deutsches Museum in Munich more than once: "*Dem Deutschen Museum war auch die bedeutendste Schreibmaschinensammlung Europas oft genug zum Kaufe angeboten, das ist jene, welche der Leipziger Fachmann Osterwald in langjähriger Sammlertätigkeit zusammengebracht hatte und die in gleicher Vollständigkeit in Europa wohl nicht ein zweites Mal zusammenkommen wird.*" (The most important typewriter collection in Europe was offered for sale to the German Museum often enough, it is the one that was collected over many years by the Leipzig tradesman Osterwald and that will not accrue to the same completeness in Europe a second time.) A lost opportunity, by Süßenguth.

the wanderer collection

And so the Wanderer-Werke got the most important European typewriter collection at that moment. It was complemented by a real Mitterhofer, the one that was rejected by the Deutsches Museum too. The Osterwald collection comprised too many American typewriters, as we read in a letter dd. April 28, 1933: "*In der Sammlung sind so viele amerikanische Maschinen enthalten, daß es für das Deutschtum von Wichtigkeit ist, an den Anfang der Entwicklung die deutsche Maschine zu stellen.*"⁹ (The collection contains so many American Machines, that it is of importance for Germanness to put the German machine at the beginning of the evolution.). Both the Mitterhofer and the Osterwald Sammlung were exhibited at the 8 International Office Exhibitions in Berlin in 1934. Probably because of that the



Wanderer-Werke published a little booklet 'Kulturgeschichtliche Schreibmaschinen Sammlung der Wanderer-Werke, Schönau-Chemnitz' ('Historico-cultural typewriter collection of the Wanderer-Werke, Schönau-Chemnitz'). Shown here¹⁰ is the result of the 'German-American contest' on pages 4 and 5, no joke in a time of emerging nationalism. Peter Mitterhofer was from Süd-Tirol, once Austria, now Italy, which was apparently of no importance in defending the Germanness. 27 Machines were mentioned in the booklet, among which Fitch, Duplex and Knoch to end with their own Continental Silenta.

Osterwalder-Werke

Postfach 101-001

Chemnitz

au bei Chemnitz

Kulturhistorische Schreibmaschinensammlung

Liste der I.Serie Maschinen Nr.1 - 30

Eingegangen

am 8. APR. 1935

Patentabteilung

-
- 1864 Mitterhofer: Erfinder der Schreibmaschine. Technisch schon sehr weit entwickelt. Typenhebel in einem vollständigen Kreis angeordnet, Anschlag von unten. Buchstaben-Schaltung je nach Buchstabenbreite verschieden groß.
- 1867 Schreibkugel: Erste handwerksmäßig hergestellte Maschine. Es werden etwa 50-100 Stück angefertigt worden sein. Konstrukteur Pastor Malling Hansen, Kopenhagen.
- 1873 Sholes-Glidden: Erste fabrikmäßig hergestellte Schreibmaschine. Schreibt nur große Buchstaben, das Geschriebene ist erst nach Hochheben des Wagens sichtbar.

A typewritten list from 1935 comprised 90 machines, alphabetically listed in three series. Most of the Osterwald machines were mentioned in it, some machines however were not: two of his Sholes & Gliddens and one S & G parts machine, Remington 4 and 10, a Bar-Lock, Faktotum, three Ideal Standards, an AEG, Osterwald's Thürey, his Globe, Stenotyper, Picht Braille, Soblick, Trebla, and one machine that was listed as an 'unknown construction model'.



In 1935 the collection was again exhibited, now at the Leipziger Messe in Halle 12, from which the shown photo might be taken.

The collection was stored at the patent department, and not open for public. *"Let's hope that the Wanderer-Werke make their wonderful collection, that is crowned by the original Mitterhofer machine, available to the general public, as it deserves. The fundamental mechanisms on which it depends will be demonstrated in its development to the visitor. Then ours in particular in the typewriter and office machine industry employed new blood will be inspired."*, said Süssenguth in 1936¹¹. Other direct advice for the collection came from no less than Johannes Meyer who wrote under his alias Ernst Martin an iconic history of the typewriter¹². It is virtually the last we know of the Wanderer collection. In 1938 it was housed in the 'Addier- und Buchungsmaschinenbau', the adding and accounting machine building. There it was bombed in the war in 1944. "As for the Wanderer Museum I can tell you that the machines were stored in a suburb of Chemnitz. Nothing is left of them except for the Mitterhofer, that was kept in a safe.", so Meyer to Dietz, his American colleague in November 1948. Dramatic, but maybe the Osterwald machines that were not listed in the Wanderer-Werke listing from 1935, such as the Thürey, the Globe or one of his Sholes & Gliddens did survive after all. Wishful thinking.

List of the Osterwald collection

1.section, upstrike machines

1. Sholes & Glidden; 2. Sholes & Glidden; 3. spätere Sholes & Glidden; 4. Sholes & Glidden mit aufklappbarer Schutzhaube; 5. Remington (4); 6. Remington 2; 7. Remington (5?); 8. Remington 7; 9. Remington 9; 10. Remington 10; 11. Sholes & Glidden, Teile; 12. Caligraph; 13. Smith Premier; 14. Yost 1; 15. later Yost; 16. New Yost (4); 17. National; 18. Densmore; 19. noch eine Densmore; 20. Frister & Rossmann; 21. Jewett; 22. Hartford; 23. Duplex; 24. Remington Sholes; 25. Fay Sholes; 26. Manhattan; 27. New Century;

2.section, downstrike machines

28. Bar-Lock; 29. later Bar-Lock; 30. Columbia Bar-Lock (shift); 31. Fitch; 32. Williams (1); 33. Maskelyne; 34. Waverley; 35. English; 36. Franklin; 37. North; 38. Salter; 39. Elliot Fisher; 40. Oliver; 41. Oliver, later model; 42. Faktotum; 43. Polygraph, rundes Tastenbrett; 44. Polygraph, straight keyboard; 45. Ideal; 46. Ideal, later model; 47. Ideal, later model;

3.section, frontstrike machines

48. Daugherty; 49. Underwood; 50. anderes, altes Underwood Modell; 51. Sholes Visible; 52. Stoewer; 53. Stoewer, späteres Modell; 54. Ideal B; 55. Continental;

56. Royal; 57. L.C. Smith; 58. Torpedo; 59. Emerson; 60. Smith Premier; 61. Star; 62. AEG

4.section, thrust action machines

63. Schreibkugel; 64. Empire; 65. Granville Automatic; 66. Knoch (Ford); 67. Adler; 68. Kanzler;

5.section, typecylinder machines

69. Crandall; 70. Hammond; 71. Hammond, sehr frühes Modell; 72. Munson; 73. Blickensderfer; 74. Lambert; 75. Thürey; 76. Commercial; 77. Victoria; 78. Keystone; 79. Postal; 80. Ultima;

6.section, indexmachines

81. Hall; 82. Hammonia; 83. World; 84. Kosmopolit; 85. Merritt; 86. American; 87. Peoples; 88. Victor; 89. Graphic; 90. Globe; 91. Edelmann; 92. Mignon; 93. Mignon, later model; 94. Niagara; 95. Liliput; 96. Practical;

7. other machines

97. Diskret; 98. Picht; 99. Stenotyper; 100. Picht Braille; 101. Longini; 102. Soblick; 103. Trebla; 104. construction model from unknown origine.

With kind help of Armin Hechler, Birgit Richter from the Staatsarchiv Leipzig, Frank Bajohr, Gerd Krumeich, Jens Lienig and Prof. Werner Krause (em.) from the TU Dresden, Johanna Sängner from the Stadtgeschichtlichen Museum Leipzig, Katharina Müller and Ralf Pulla from the Technische Sammlungen Dresden, Kurt Ryba, Maria Mayr from the Schreibmaschinenmuseum Peter Mitterhofer in Partschins, Martin Reese, Rosemarie Hänsel from the Sächsischen Landes- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden, Viola Dörffeldt from the Staatsarchiv Chemnitz.

¹ The collection of the Sächsisches Industriemuseum Chemnitz resides a large poster from about 1910 from Louis Osterwald, Büromaschinen und Geschäftsorganisation, Dresden. No familiar relationship has been found yet.

² L.Brauner, Zur Berliner Büro-Ausstellung vom 30 April bis 9.Mai in den Ausstellungshallen am Kaiserdamm, in: Das Geschäft, 1925

³ A.Osterwald, Das Maschinenschreiben mit einer Hand. Methodischer Lehrgang, Leipzig um 1916.

⁴ A.Osterwald, Geschichte und Entwicklung der Schreibmaschine, in: Archiv für Buchgewerbe, 51, 1914, pp.252-254.

⁵ De Pressa, Tilburgsche courant, tweede blad, 1928.07.02.

⁶ Because of the censored strip on the photo it probably dates from the mid-1930s as a part of the collection of the Wanderer-Werke. The photo is listed in File 20202 Leipziger Messeamt with number F 9916. In 1935 there was a special exhibition 'Werdegang einer Schreibmaschine' (history of a typewriter) in Hall 12 of the Leipzig Trade Fair.

The machine in the photo in front of the three visitors and at the left on the row with the Sholes & Gliddens could be interpreted as Wanderer's Mitterhofer under a glass case, with the booklet in front of it, which makes a date of 1935 for the photo very likely. A year earlier a similar exhibition '70 Jahre Entwicklung der Schreibmaschine' had taken place at the International Office Fair in Berlin with a presentation of the historical machines by a demonstrator in a historical costume.

⁷ Osterwald is recorded at the Lothringer Strasse 41 with the annexation 'Bürobedarf', stationery. There is no mention of his company and sales rooms anymore. It could cross one's mind that Albert Osterwald might have been a victim of the 'Arisierung', aryanization, the social exclusion of Jewish inhabitants and the confiscation of their houses and their businesses. However, there is no trace of that yet. According to Dr.Frank Bajohr and to Dr.Johanna Sänger, Kuratorin Stadt- und Landesgeschichte since 1800 of the Stadtgeschichtliches Museum Leipzig, Osterwald cannot be found under the persecuted Jews in Leipzig.

The Address book from 1949 still lists Osterwald at the Lothringer Strasse 41, with annexation 'Bürobedarf'. His relatives are not mentioned anymore. The street is called Coppistrasse nowadays.

⁸ A.Süssenguth, Aus der Geschichte der Schreibmaschinen und von historischen Schreibmaschinen-Sammlungen, in: Büromaschinen-Mechaniker, 1936, pp.6-8.

⁹ Technische Sammlungen Dresden, Schriftgutsammlung, TSD_SD_2014_00038.

¹⁰ With courtesy of the Schreibmaschinenmuseum Peter Mitterhofer in Partschins.

¹¹ A.Süssenguth, ibidem.

¹² J.Legrand, "Machen Sie einen Versuch mit meinen Adressen !", in: Meyer/Martin – das Werk eines guten Menschen, Maastricht/Rotterdam 2009, p.22

