

## The Uhlenbecks' life in letters

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### Introduction

Both C.C. Uhlenbeck and his wife Willy Uhlenbeck-Melchior were avid letter writers: to family, friends, colleagues, former students, and even to five little Indian boys he had got to know during his 1910 stint in Montana (Eggermont-Molenaar 2005:40).<sup>1</sup> About 660 letters could be traced and obtained: in archives, private homes and in between reprints now in the Leiden University Library.<sup>2</sup> Among those letters were some by his wife Willy, about or on behalf of her husband. The Uhlenbeck correspondence contains a wealth of information about his family life, his health, his shifting scholarly interests, his early retirement and the subsequent moves to other cities.

A large number of the letters are addressed to two of his former students: Rein-der van der Meulen (1882-1972) and Jean Philippe Vogel (1871-1958). A fair number are addressed to colleagues in his own Indo-Germanic discipline, but many more to his colleagues in the fields of his pet languages: first there are those to Hugo Schuchardt (1842-1927), a professor of Romance Philology based in Graz, Austria; Georges Lacombe (1879-1947), a Paris based Basque scholar, and Don Julio de Urquijo (1871-1950), editor of the journal in which most of Uhlenbeck's Basque articles were published. Second in this regard is his correspondence with a number of American linguists: foremost Franz Boas (1858-1942), who published most of Uhlenbeck's American language articles.

Then there was the occasional correspondence with family members and colleagues not necessarily from his own discipline. A nice example is a request by Uhlenbeck dated September 7, 1933, to his American colleague R.H. Lowie (1883-1957) about the victims of anti-Semitism in German, specifically Dr. Th.W. Danzel (1886-1954) from Hamburg.<sup>3</sup> Uhlenbeck asked Lowie to use his influence to assist Danzel, with whom "I am good friends since 1924 [since the Americanists' congress in Göteborg]."

Another example of Uhlenbeck dealing with a request is when the famous Leiden historian Johan Huizinga (1872-1945) asked him in 1937 to write something about the

word ‘play’ in any foreign language.<sup>4</sup> Uhlenbeck replied that he could only advise him sparingly, but then continued to write no less than ten pages on the concept of ‘play’ in Blackfoot. Huizinga condensed this to one and a half page in *Homo Ludens* (1950).

People who received Uhlenbeck’s letters must have appreciated them a great deal. In many of them he comes across as a caring, cordial, empathetic, generous, interested, sometimes humorous, and sometimes self-deprecating person. Uhlenbeck always thanked people for their letters, postcards or parcels and frequently encouraged, congratulated, consoled or consulted his addressees. If he knew the spouse of his addressee, he went to great lengths to greet them most elegantly. Exceptions to these general tendencies are invariably related to professional assertiveness.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, Uhlenbeck appears not to have preserved correspondence directed to him. He may have discarded it along with many other possessions when they moved to Switzerland to retire and were unable to bring too many things with them. Hence, in the vast majority of cases we only have Uhlenbeck’s side of the correspondence.

#### **Early family life: Amsterdam (1892-1899) and Leiden (1899-1926)**

Uhlenbeck and his wife had no children, but in 1898 they were blessed with the custody of three teenaged orphans: two nephews and a niece. His thoughts about this new development in his life are expressed on a postcard, stamped July 13, 1898, to Jean Philippe Vogel. Uhlenbeck told him that he had very little time available: “because of an unexpected death in my family I became the custodian of four minors, something that brings many concerns.”<sup>6</sup> In a letter to his former teacher, J.W. Müller (1858-1945), Uhlenbeck elaborated on his custodianship:

About us, perhaps you have heard that in May we will move to Hilversum because of my Van Spengler niece and two nephews. After their parents died I became their custodian. They have spent most of the summer holidays and the entire Christmas vacation here. Starting in July they will live with us permanently. I also have a fourth charge, namely their oldest brother, but he is already twenty-one years of age and is a clerk in the town of Loosduinen. You can imagine what drastic changes this custodianship has brought about in our quiet lives. Our lives revolve entirely around the Van Spengler children; however, scholarship will not be neglected.<sup>7</sup>

The extended Uhlenbeck family moved to Hilversum around the month of June. As soon as they were settled Uhlenbeck’s appointment to professor in Old Germanic languages came about, so the next move, in October of that same year, was to Leiden. The orphaned children subsequently went to a boarding school. With regard to his custodial charges, Uhlenbeck still comes across in his letters as trying hard and successfully so. On July 29, 1900, he mentions to Vogel that they had gone to Katwijk [the North Sea beach closest to Leiden] every day. On December 3, 1904, again to Vogel, Uhlenbeck says that Jan, his

youngest nephew, will spend the Christmas holidays with them. It would be his last (boarding) school year and he was going to be trained as a town administrator – “not a brilliant job”, wrote Uhlenbeck. In his next letter he added, regarding his choice for his nephew, “you will understand that I only choose this field as a *pis-aller*.”

On August 6, 1905, Jan van Spengler’s birthday, Uhlenbeck wrote to Vogel that, “Jan, my youngest Van Spengler nephew, has typhoid, but the disease is developing favourably.” In this same letter some personal frustration seeps in. The first time we know of, was in his letter to the Basque scholar W.J. van Eys. In it he wrote that he was not in Amsterdam, but in Valkenburg, in the south of the country, being overstrained from too much work and suffering from most malicious neuralgias, “which caused me to terminate my courses by the end of May.” Uhlenbeck now confided, in the August 6, 1905 letter, that he had not been feeling very well, and that he was very tired from the courses he had to teach as well as from his Basque research.

A few years earlier Uhlenbeck’s work on the Basque language, actually his first linguistic love, had not gone well. Back in 1903 his Austrian colleague Schuchardt (1903:393-406) had reviewed his work (Uhlenbeck 1903) unfavourably. Uhlenbeck explained to him on December 23, 1903 that his (Uhlenbeck’s) mistakes were to be blamed on the incompleteness of Dutch libraries and on his relying too much on the work of the Basque scholar Van Eys. Uhlenbeck also went on to note that Basque was no longer important to him: “I will not continue the study of the Basque language. I hope to just publish one collection of articles on Basque noun formation.”<sup>8</sup>

Schuchardt must have recognized the immense scientific potential of this young, assertive, touchy linguist, and, swallowing his pride, he wrote a letter that made Uhlenbeck change his mind. Only one week later, on December 28, 1903, Uhlenbeck replied that he was glad that Schuchardt had taken his letter so well and that the latter’s reply had ended his feelings of bitterness, which so far he had been unable to suppress. From then on both gentlemen became quite intimate correspondents.

On December 16, 1905 Uhlenbeck wrote to Schuchardt that he was also busy learning Greenlandic. Only two weeks later, on January 19, 1906, Uhlenbeck confided to Vogel, who was still in India, that he was in bed, not feeling well, and was taken, “more and more to the study of incorporating polysynthetic language types [...] the last few years I have often studied Basque, but now I am busier with Greenlandic. Such languages often cast a surprising light on Indo-Germanic phenomena.”<sup>9</sup>

On August 25, 1907 Uhlenbeck wrote again to Vogel. With his shifting interest in languages and his perception that most students were not interested in topics of his own interest, Uhlenbeck’s health seems to have shifted also:

The last few years I have occupied myself much of the time with North-American languages, the results of which I will not send you because they are quite far removed from your concerns. Now I slowly return to Indo-Germanic. This summer we did not go anywhere, at least, not together. My wife went with one of her sis-

ters to the Ahr Valley and during the Easter holidays I spent a week in Paris with Jan, my youngest stepson, to show him around. We are doing well. And I just suffer once in a while from sleeplessness and fatigue. I became too busy with analyzing endlessly long verb morphemes [...]. Sometimes my job consumes me too much. I have a lot of nice students who like to know about the Old-Germanic world, though there are only a few who, in the end, want to dedicate themselves to Germanic or Comparative studies.

On June 15, 1908, Uhlenbeck noted, again to Vogel, that professors are busy people, at least “when they make an effort to do their duty,” and that “existence” also brought along other concerns. Still, he, his wife and the Spengler boys were doing fine, adding that he and “the mrs.” liked living in Leiden, though a university was not in every respect an agreeable institution, but “at least it leaves time for one’s own studies.” Uhlenbeck went on to say that he hoped to lecture at the Royal Academy about the language of the Klamath tribes in Oregon. He ended with the note that he thought that Vogel was very lucky with his work in archeology in India, “which must be quite different from living in a dull little city in [the province of] South Holland.”

Uhlenbeck’s next letter to Vogel, on September 10, 1908, articulates his feelings of confinement even more:

The older you get, the busier, partly because of engaging in connections which you cannot or do not want to part with, partly because of becoming quite ponderous and losing the art of cutting matters off *à la légère*. My Basque articles are being translated into French, which also troubles me, and I am busy with my American and other hobbies. Furthermore, classes will start soon and it is about time to think about my lectures.

On October 28, 1907 he wrote to Schuchardt that he was immersed in the study of the Malaysian and Javanese languages. On March 4, 1909 Uhlenbeck wrote that lately he had not felt “very Indo-Germanic” and would take time off in the spring of 1910 to travel to the North-American Indians with “meinem Schüler Herr Cand. Phil. De Josselin de Jong.” On a postcard stamped March 22, 1909, Uhlenbeck advised Schuchardt that he would get back to Basque, that he was in no way tired of Europe and that: “[as] Indo-Germanic comes across as less and less appealing, I will have to leave Basque on the back burner, while learning Algonquian languages appeals to me very much.”

### **Montana (summers of 1910 and 1911)**

On September 27, 1909, Uhlenbeck informed Schuchardt that during the past few months he had only studied Algonquian, and that before traveling to Montana, he would send a treatise on Algonquian morphology to the Royal Academy in order to obtain permission for a stay. On February 14, 1910 Uhlenbeck requested of the agent of the Blackfeet Reser-

vation that he himself and his student J.P.B. de Josselin de Jong, would be allowed to “have a stay of some months in Blackfoot reservation, Montana, with the purpose of living among the Indians and studying their manners, their superstitions and their language.”<sup>10</sup>

On March 22, 1910 Uhlenbeck advised Schuchardt that on April 22 De Josselin de Jong and he would travel to Montana to a band of Blackfoot Indians he had chosen and that he would be back in November (see Genee 2009 for more details on both trips to Montana and Uhlenbeck's work there). From the September 4, 1910 letter to Schuchardt, we know that both gentlemen were already back home. In an upbeat letter to his Leiden/Flemish colleague Willem de Vreese (1869-1938), Uhlenbeck wrote, in Dutch, on October 13, 1910:

I just reply by postcard because I am very busy. I recently returned from a long journey. I spent over three months interacting on a daily basis with the Blackfoot Indians of Montana. Right now I am very busy processing the linguistic and ethnological material that I gathered there as well as preparing for a second study trip, which I will undertake in 1912.<sup>11</sup>

On December 27, 1910, with his mind apparently still inspired by the Montana prairie winds, Uhlenbeck wrote to Vogel that he could understand that, in the end, a practical, non-academic job would not satisfy him (Vogel):

But, a university, however, is dull. Don't forget that. If I had a fortune, it would not cross my mind to lock myself up in such an institution. I would always like to do *fieldwork*, capturing living languages from the mouths of living people. But beggars can't be choosers. This summer I learned a great deal and already in February I will publish a package of *Original Blackfoot Texts*, with an English translation. The main result of my trip though, is an enormous body of grammatical materials. It will be the basis for a paper entitled “*Morphology of the Blackfoot language*.” However, this will not be ready before 1913/1914. Before that time, specifically in May of 1911, I will visit the red brethren once more on their prairies, accompanied by my wife. We will camp for three months in the camp of the Blackfeet under the guidance of an Indian we befriended, who has already provided me with great services.<sup>12</sup>

Uhlenbeck and his wife arrived on the Blackfeet Reservation near Browning, Montana in 1911, “on Thursday evening, June 8, at 6.57 p.m. [...] It is only a small depot in the middle of the prairie.” This is how Willy Uhlenbeck-Melchior started her diary. Willy's diary gives a splendid impression of how Uhlenbeck conducted his fieldwork. There were glorious days, but much more than once the work was conducted under for him (and her) dire conditions such as bad weather, strange food, belly-aches, with too many visitors or none at all, deaths, teachers not showing up in time or not at all, etc. etc.

Willy kept her diary up for three months, each day faithfully recording what she saw and heard and how she busied herself with cleaning her husband's boots and worrying about his moods. From his wife's diary Uhlenbeck comes across as a very focused fieldworker, albeit once in a while whining and generally having little regard for the impact their presence could have on the lives of his teachers. Uhlenbeck often suffered small physical inconveniences, and was nervous and high-strung.

In contrast, in his letters to friends, family and colleagues, he always commented on whatever might have befallen his addressee and mostly showed himself to be generous and energetic. The focus on his work and complaints about his health feature throughout his correspondence from Montana.

### **Back in Leiden (1910 and 1911)**

Back in Leiden Uhlenbeck again wasted no time. On October 14, 1911 he began a letter to Schuchardt with: "Yesterday night we returned home." He apologized for not having replied to Schuchardt's letter of August 3: "It was because all my mail was kept at the post office, while my wife and I tried to establish friendly connections with the 'red' brethren." In the same letter Uhlenbeck also apologized for having declined to do something on Basque for one of Schuchardt's colleagues:

My interest in Basque is undiminished, but the Blackfeet take up most of my time. During my second stay at the Blackfoot Reservation I gathered a lot of material that might have linguistic and ethnological merit. I will first publish a new series of Blackfoot texts and then organize and publish my grammatical data. That will leave little time for other studies.

On February 2, 1912 Uhlenbeck wrote again to Schuchardt, this time apologizing that he had not sent him any presents for his sixtieth birthday: "It is because of the Indians. My restless life during the past years has not allowed me to attend to anything in your extensive fields of study." Explaining that he could not attend Schuchardt's lecture in Graz, Uhlenbeck went on: "But, no linguist has had such a big influence on my thinking as you [...]. I feel that I am your grateful student, not only on the far away steppes of the far west, but also on European soil."

Somehow in the course of 1912 Uhlenbeck's restlessness must have gotten the better of him. Factors contributing to this may have included his relentless efforts to have the Blackfoot texts published right after he had gathered them, reflections about the soured relations at the reservation apparent from his wife's diary, and his failed attempts to adopt the twelve-year old Blackfeet "mission kid" Willy Kennedy. These combined with having to deal with a teaching commitment he had lost interest in, feeling confined in his city, and with a potentially inherited propensity for depression, may have contributed to the "over-exertion" that befell him, not for the first nor the last time.<sup>13</sup>

On November 5, 1912, Willy Uhlenbeck-Melchior wrote to Schuchardt, in German:

Uhlenbeck is not at home; he has been in hospital for three months. Fortunately he is doing better now. But it will still take some time. And, when Uhlenbeck will leave the hospital, we have to go to a *Luftkurort* to get some fresh air. It has already been a long time that he has not been very well and I think that during the last few years he has worked too hard and this has affected his nervous system [...].

One week later Schuchardt received another letter from Willy, again in German:

Thank you for your postcard, I can tell you that Uhlenbeck is doing better. He was able to leave the hospital again, was at home for a few days and now we are in Nijmegen and will stay here for a few weeks. Our doctor wanted us to travel abroad, to the south. Fortunately, he agreed later that we look for a good hotel in [the province of] Gelderland and that is what we found in Keizer Karel. Nijmegen is a nice city, and rain or shine, we go for a walk three times a day. Uhlenbeck is doing better, his nerves are still not quieted down, so he often gets excited and then the next moment is nervously fatigued [...].

By October 27, 1913 Uhlenbeck must have regained his strength as he mentioned to his colleague C.H. de Goeje (1879-1955) his and De Josselin de Jong's plan to establish a journal, "of cosmopolitan and international character," dedicated to "*die einheimischen Sprachen und Literaturen Amerikas*, (title and an important part of the contributions would be in German)." Uhlenbeck added that things, however, were not yet so far advanced and: "My wife is completely healthy, but I still cannot keep up work for a longer stretch of time, I am forgetful, make mistakes and show all kinds of signs of being fatigued, be it that it is better now than a year ago."

On December 25, 1913 Uhlenbeck promised to help Schuchardt to have an article published, noting: "My health is quite good. I look well, but can only do a little work. My head is quickly fatigued. I walk a lot. Maybe it will once get better."

Uhlenbeck's letter, in English, of September 16, 1914 to James Mooney (1861-1921) reveals how Uhlenbeck felt about a number of issues at the time and is also a good example of his letters in general.<sup>14</sup>

Many thanks for your letters from Cherokee, in answer to my Blackfoot paper and the supplementary list of errata. I am especially grateful for your good wishes concerning the Dutch neutrality, and I am in perfect sympathy with what you say about independent government and emperors. Long ago I had a talk with a Hindu who said to me that his country had no use for the maharaja's. Then I asked him what he would like to do with them. He answered me: "We might send them to Europe, they would be interesting to the ladies." So we Europeans ought to send the emperors somewhere. Maybe Wilhelm of Germany might get a "free home-

stead" in North-Dacota, or anywhere on the prairie. But perhaps the Americans would not care to have the modern Attila in one of their states. It is such a pity that the great nations of our old continent should hate each other!

I hope you will have had a "good time" among the Cherokee, and that your health is better now. It will be very interesting to see the results of your field-work published. The Cherokee are such an interesting people because of their great progress in civilization, and because they are a stray branch of the Iroquoians. Your texts will be very important for students of their complicated grammar and its relations to the grammatical systems of other Iroquoian dialects

When I had to read the proof sheets of my Blackfoot texts, I was not in very "good shape," being tired and nervous, and so I had to leave a good deal of the correction to others. But now I feel much better, though the European war is a rather irritating business.

Other fruitful American contacts followed, leading to flurries of exchanges. On October 4, 1915 Franz Boas invited Uhlenbeck to become a member of the editorial board of the *International Journal of American Linguistics*, which was about to be established.<sup>15</sup> On October 26, Uhlenbeck replied that he would join that board "with the greatest pleasure," promising "to do everything in my power to further it."

Leaving the many professional exchanges aside, on February 17, 1918 Uhlenbeck wrote, in English, to Boas: "Thanks to Heaven, we Dutch are living still in a neutral country, so that we may have intercourse with all countries of Europe" and promised reviews of "recent linguistic publications." Uhlenbeck wanted to have it known that he had been fulfilling his promise to announce the journal's birth, and wrote to Boas on May 18, 1918, that he had written a short review of the journal's first issue for the *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* and distributed the copies he had received. He advised Boas on what else he had undertaken to draw attention to the journal, and continued: "I shall write a paper for the "Journal" but I think I shall have to wait a long time. I suffer from neurasthenia and insomnia so that I shall have to take rest during the whole summer."<sup>16</sup>

Two days later, on May 22, 1918, Uhlenbeck advised the curators of his university:<sup>17</sup>

The undersigned respectfully wishes to inform you that at the moment he feels his head is so tired that he is of the opinion that for some time he will need absolute mental rest. That is why he addresses himself to your board requesting permission to end his academic teachings by the end of this week, and also to dismiss him until the summer holiday from other job-related duties [...].

It was not until August 12 that Uhlenbeck replied to Boas, in English:

As to your suggestions in your letter of April 8<sup>th</sup>, I shall not be able for a long time to do anything of the kind. I shall only be too happy, if the state of my health will allow me to resume my work in the University after the summer vacation. At all



events, I shall have to confine myself for many months to come to the things I have to teach. Nevertheless I do not so despair at all, there may be some time in 1919 that I can return to the studies I like most. I will not promise anything in particular, for fear of not being able to redeem my word, but still I have the idea of an article in my head, that perhaps would do for my purpose of showing an active interest in your beautiful enterprise.

In 1919 nothing seems to have been published by Uhlenbeck. On March 6, 1920, Willy Uhlenbeck wrote again to Schuchardt, this time in Dutch (presumably Uhlenbeck dictated the 1913 letters to his wife in German):

Weeks ago we received your postcard. But, we did not receive the journal to which you referred. I reply because Uhlenbeck is ill. He was so fatigued mentally and physically that he had to stop everything. Currently he has been bedridden for seven weeks, but yesterday he was up for an hour and walked about in his study and found your postcard there. He is on sick-leave until mid-September; and if everything goes well, he should be recovered by then. But his mental capacity is not like it used to be and whether teaching will go well, we must wait and see. If it does not go well, he has to apply for his pension. On April 1 we hope to go away for some months and go on a cruise in the summer. We are hoping that his nervous system will calm down and strengthen. This morning he spoke for some time about you and wishes the best for you and your country [...]

In the fall of 1922, life seemed to have picked up again. Uhlenbeck wrote on November 14 to Schuchardt that he had spent a few months in the south of France and in some of the Basque provinces of Spain, adding: "How much I would like to study just once a Basque dialect." Six months later he had that chance, or rather, one of his students was going to do just that. On February 5, 1923 Uhlenbeck continued:

It will be of interest to you that a young Scot, William Rollo, M.A., who did his M.A. in Leiden, has chosen the description of a Basque local dialect as the topic for his dissertation. I wrote de Urquijo about him and consulted about which dialect to choose. Because of several reasons I thought of Marquina. But, de Urquijo will be able to advise us. Next summer young Rollo and his young wife (a Philologist as well!) will travel to the Spanish Basque country. I will have a few preparatory discussions with him. Right now he is busy learning Basque.

In the fall of the same year, on October 28, 1923, Uhlenbeck again wrote, in German, a very enthusiastic five-page letter to Schuchardt about all kinds of Basque matters, adding

I believe that I already wrote to you that we, my wife and I, will again travel to the Basque country next summer. We hope to stay there all in all for three months,

which we will divide between Itxasson and a few towns in the Span. Basque Province. In Itxasson I intend to systematically study dialects.

But something intervened. On December 27, 1923, Uhlenbeck, who had kept up an elaborate correspondence in French with the Basque scholar Georges Lacombe since 1906, ended his last five-page letter to him with a P.S.:

I am afraid that obstacles will prevent me from going to the Basque country in 1924. What to do about it? One can make oneself useful with Basque studies even while staying at home. My health is very good; however I have so much to do at the university that I will be quite fatigued by the start of the summer. How I have longed to be completely free to dedicate myself to the studies that are dear to me!

In 1924 Uhlenbeck replied to a 1920 letter from Willy Kennedy, one of the Blackfeet mission children. He was the twelve-year old boy who, according to Joe Tatsey, one of Uhlenbeck's "teachers" in Montana in 1910 and 1911, had been "jumping around, saying, now the professor is coming, taking me out of school" (Eggermont-Molenaar 2005:38).

On December 24, 1924, Uhlenbeck replied to young Kennedy, in English: "It is a long time ago, indeed, since I received your letter from Heart Butte [hamlet on the Blackfeet Reservation], but I never considered you as a 'lost' friend."

Uhlenbeck continued with some niceties, thanked for the snapshot, recalled the good old times and wondered about Willy's status: was he married or not? He told him about the 1924 Göteborg Americanist congress where he had been a delegate for the Dutch government and that, when he had returned from Sweden, he (spelling Willy's name in his own way):

was tired very much, and I lay down in my bed for a week. Mrs. Uhlenbeck did not accompany me to Sweden. She preferred to stay at home [...]. I hope to leave the government's service, and then we shall settle down in a quiet place and take it easy [...]. Now my dear Willie, I'll finish for this time. Whenever you write to me again, I shall answer you, as long as I live. I cannot forget the "little cropeared bulldog," as I used to call you when you were a kid.  
With our love I remain as always your old friend, C. C. Uhlenbeck.

In a second letter, on January 22, 1925, Uhlenbeck pondered about the possibility of Willy coming to the Netherlands, saying that if Willy were to come, he should do so in the summer,

then Holland looks nicer, and then I should have leisure to be your companion. In winter I have to work very hard. It is such a pity that it is so far away from Holland to Montana, and that traveling costs so very much. We cannot think of visiting you, because our income is limited too.



*Uhlenbeck met zijn vriendje Kennedy 1911 ['Uhlenbeck with his young friend [Willy] Kennedy']  
Photo: "Mr. Cole, a lecturer from Chicago". Courtesy M. Uhlenbeck-Winkel*

Uhlenbeck apologized for not having any photographs to send, "still I send you, included in this letter, a snapshot from a Dutch newspaper." About the good old days of 1911, he reminisced:

Yes, I often recall the time when I wanted to take you with me to Europe and give you an education, but you couldn't part with the fine hills and the coulees of Montana. But we think of you with the same love. And perhaps you are happier now than you would have been in our county, though we would have done everything we could to make you happy. I shall never forget those days in the Mission when Bear-chief (your great-uncle) and Mr. Tatsey were telling me stories, and when I fell ill, and you took care of me. And how many letters did you write to me since that time! I have even some drawings you made when you were a small Mission-boy, and a pocket-knife, and a prayer-book, there is no danger of forgetting you.

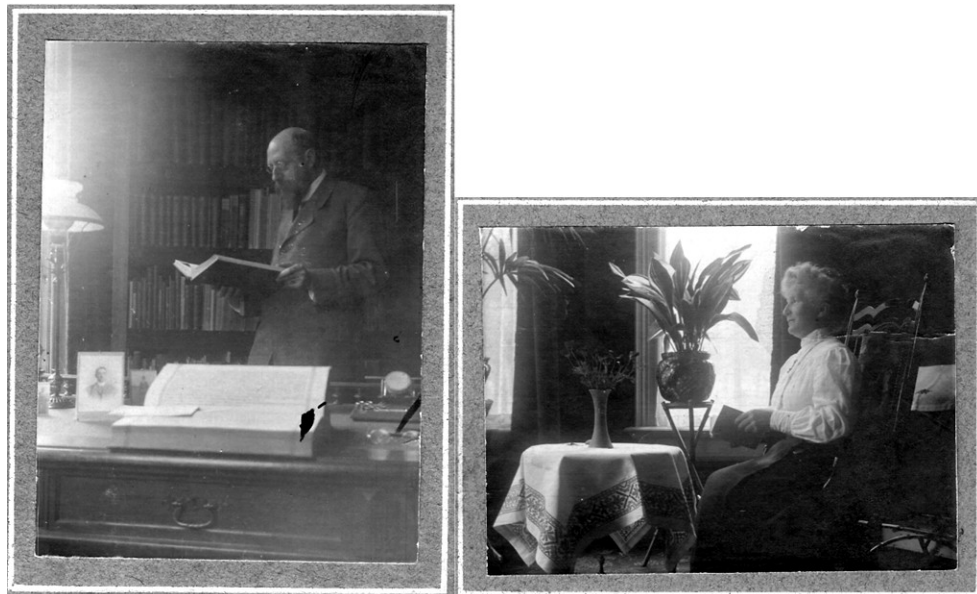
In this same letter Uhlenbeck daydreamed about resigning:

taken all together, I am teaching students already 32 years! If I left the Government's service now, I wouldn't get a full pension and we wouldn't have enough to live upon. So I shall have to serve for seven years more. After a few weeks I hope to be able to send you better photo's of Mrs. Uhlenbeck and myself.

A few months later, on April 22 of the same year, 1925, Uhlenbeck's mother, Julie le Roux, who had been living in Oegstgeest, a village near Leiden, passed away. In hindsight it is clear that Uhlenbeck planned to leave Leiden after his retirement. The fact that he no longer had to care for his mother may have facilitated his plans.

On October 5, 1925 he enclosed a photograph of himself and his wife, thanked Willy for the photograph of his new wife, and expressed his appreciation for Willy's new job at a sawmill:

As to ourselves, we are well and happy, only getting older. Some day I shall leave the State's service and take my ease. I cannot stand the fatigue of teaching and studying all the day as well as I could before.



*Dr. C.C. Uhlenbeck and Mrs. Uhlenbeck-Melchior. Courtesy William and Charles Kennedy.*

Vogel, who was visiting Medan, Sumatra, was next to hear about the retirement plans. In an upbeat letter of October 19, 1925, Uhlenbeck thanked him for a letter, noting: "too bad you were sick in Medan, an entire week at the Boroboedor seems to me to be a great

privilege, too bad Jan [de Josselin de Jong] cannot visit you," and, "if we had been younger we would have liked to experience such things," but now:

We are "ruins," good for demolition. We are doing well, though. Willy is even doing very well. I would be doing fine if I didn't have to suffer spiritually from continuously rambling from one subject to another, as a professor in a number of studies must do. In the end, we would say: it keeps your spirit on the move. But of course one cannot do everything well. This, however, presses less on my conscience than on the High Government's, which does not understand that as well as a professor in General and in Comparative Indo-German, there should be one in German at the Leiden University. But, in the end it does not matter which courses are being taught, or which Chairs there are. Everything comes down to the person. Yesterday I turned fifty-nine years old. Too bad it wasn't sixty-five years; in that case I would leave my job right away. *Svâtantryam* [independence] has always been my ideal, but a poor man is not a count and must serve.<sup>18</sup> *Hang it!* As soon as I will be retired, my real life will start. Nevertheless, in December I will speak at the Royal Acad. about new terminology in Blackfoot (i.e. - how my "*dear Indians*" express the notion of "telephone," and such pieces of information). But, to get back to the topic of travel, we would have loved to see Ceylon. For us so many memories are connected to it. I just can't stand it that England did not give it back to the Netherlands in 1815. If Ireland is John Bull's other island, apparently John Bull still needed another island. *That feller has a good stomach and can digest a whole lot.*<sup>19</sup>

Six months later *real life* was about to materialize. On March 12, 1926 Uhlenbeck wrote to his former student Reinder van der Meulen,<sup>20</sup>

I just learned, to my great relief, that I am declared unfit for state service [...]. Our best wishes. Oh, yes, this summer we will move to Nijmegen.

Three days later, on March 15, 1926, Uhlenbeck wrote to Willy Kennedy, in English, that it was too bad that he lost his job at the saw-mill, wondered whether he had accepted the offer to play in an Indian concert band, warned him not to get any fatter: "If you have no work for the time being, you may play baseball or something of the kind." Then again the idea of visiting popped up:

How would we like to see you both! But it is such a long way from Holland to Montana, and it costs such a lot of money. Now I am talking of money, I will tell you that I shall leave the Queen's service after a few months. I often feel tired very much and teaching is too much for me. Properly I ought to have stayed in the Government's service until my 65<sup>th</sup> year, but I have got a special permission to leave it five years earlier. I shall enjoy my freedom very much. We shall have to live on a pension of about 2400 dollars, which is not much for people of our standing,

the more since I have a library and we need a pretty big house to give it a place. But we think we shall find such a house at Nijmegen, Holland, where we are going to live. In summer we shall move to our new place.

During his correspondence with Uhlenbeck, Willy Kennedy lived in Polson, Montana, at the Salish/Kootenay Reservation. He no longer spoke Blackfoot, nor did those at the reservation where he lived.

The very next day Uhlenbeck communicated the news of his ill health to the Leiden University Board, advising that he would submit to Her Majesty the Queen his resignation. Not only did Queen Wilhelmina graciously grant his request on April 28; on August 25, 1926, she bestowed on him the Order of the Dutch Lion.<sup>21</sup>

Not long after, Schuchardt received the following change of address, stamped July 13, 1926: *Neue Adresse von Prof. Dr. C. C. Uhlenbeck: Nijmegen. Niederlande. Bergendalsche weg 251.*

### **Early Retirement: Nijmegen (1926-1930)**

Once in Nijmegen, relieved from a teaching load in which he had lost interest, Uhlenbeck primarily published articles on Basque and Blackfoot, keeping in touch with Schuchardt, Boas, and also with his favourite former students Vogel and Van der Meulen.

Uhlenbeck's next and last known letter to Willy Kennedy is dated November 28, 1926. He started with congratulations on the birth of son William, noted that Willy K. and his wife had entered a new period in their life, and continued:

Until now your married life was a permanent honeymoon, and when you did not work, you had nothing else to do than to make love to each other. Now you have your little boy to look after, to guide him and teach him, to take care of his body and his soul, that he may thrive in good health and honesty to be a comfort to you both when you are old!

Uhlenbeck goes on to describe his own nice house and garden and the beauty of the city of Nijmegen, but:

You must not suppose that I don't work any more. On the contrary, I pass many and many hours in my study (which has a fine view on hills and cornfields) before my writing-table, reading and writing about American Indian language and other things that interest me. I hope to be working until I die. My health is much better now I have no teaching to do. Our old maidservant has followed us from Leiden to Nijmegen, and does everything possible to make things easy and comfortable for Mrs. Uhlenbeck. When I think of it, I cannot imagine you as a husband and father, you the little kid I knew so well, so many years ago. It is a good thing I have so many pictures of you that it is possible to me to realize your gradual development

from a schoolboy to an honorable man! We hope to hear from you again some day. With our love to you, to Mrs. Kennedy and baby (will he be a "little crop-eared bull-dog" as his father was).<sup>22</sup>

"Real life," research just for its own sake and euphoria are reflected in Uhlenbeck's letter of December 21, 1927 to Vogel:

*Vihagottama* [Dear Vogel / literally "Supreme Bird"],  
just a few words to thank you so much for your humorous letter, which gave us great fun. Some things you said about my speech to the Academy will certainly make me think. If I can, next time I will try to communicate something that will capture the interest of everyone. I chose the Wiyot-Algonquian problem because it is very current, taking into account the advice of a former academy member (long since "dead and gone" – *pareyivân ... pravato mahîr anu!*<sup>23</sup>): At the Royal Academy you can read [aloud] everything, no matter how boring, as long as it is learned. With our best wishes to both of you.

*ângapâta* [falling on eight body parts, namely the two hands, two knees, two feet, breast, forehead, i.e. 'completely prostrated,' in order to show deep respect]

Two years later, on March 3, 1929, Uhlenbeck communicated to Jos. Schrijnen (1869-1938), with whom he sat in the organizing committee for the First International Congress of Linguists, that he did not feel like participating in the first session of the *Commission d'Enquête Linguistique*, which was going to be held in June 1929 in Paris.

I feel old and averse to controversy. My first duty is to make sure that the Black-foot data, which I gathered under the sacrifice of much effort and money, will reach a publishable state. Fortunately I hereby enjoy the forceful and devoted help of Rob van Gulik.<sup>24</sup>

Some incident, alluded to by Van Gulik in *The Chinese Lake Murders*, and later by De Josselin de Jong (1952:252), caused, perhaps indirectly, the Uhlenbecks to leave town. Uhlenbeck sent Schuchardt and Boas his next new address, postmarked April 3, 1930: *Von heute an wohnt Prof. Dr. C. C. Uhlenbeck nicht mehr in Nijmegen sondern Amersfoort (Holland). Wijersstraat 10.*

### Retired to Amersfoort (1930-1936)

Despite having to leave Nijmegen, not all old ties were severed. Uhlenbeck's next letter to Vogel, marked "confidential," was on behalf of his former Nijmegen pupil Robert van Gulik, who in September 1929 had gone to Leiden to study Chinese (see Barkman and Van der Hoeven 1993:27).<sup>25</sup> Uhlenbeck wrote on January 8, 1931:

*Vihagottama* [Dear Vogel],

May I request some information on behalf of R.H. van Gulik?

Said youngster is currently working hard for his BA in Chinese-Japanese literature. During the holidays he also studies Sanskrit and Russian with me. After his candidacy he also wants to do his Master's. As an elective subject he wants to do Sanskrit. Between the time of his candidacy and his Master's he will attend your classes. Right now he has no time for it (he had to stop a Russian class taught by Mr. Van Wijk that he attended; this does not matter though, during the holidays I can teach him a lot).

My question is: what do you require from a [student in] Chinese/Japanese who chooses Sanskrit as the elective subject? Is it sufficient that he studies with me the entire *Pañcatantra*, *Kathāsaritsāgara* and *Mahābhārata*, and *Rāmāyana*-pieces from Böhlinck? And that he also read a difficult text that you tackle with your more advanced students?

Letters to Urquijo and De Goeje show that, once in Amersfoort, Uhlenbeck seamlessly continued his scholarly enterprises.

Despite his poor eyesight and the lack of a public library, Uhlenbeck managed to publish a number of articles in his Amersfoort years.<sup>26</sup> He had bought a house there, conveniently close to the railway station as the Royal Academy in Amsterdam was going to be his spiritual home for the next few years. Did the Uhlenbecks intend to live in Amersfoort for only a couple of years? In April 1935 he wrote to the Secretary of the Royal Academy that he was "going on a trip for a considerable time," implying that he would not be around in May and June; and in December 1935 he started to give away some of his belongings. Did he investigate his future residence in Switzerland during that summer? On April 2, 1936, Uhlenbeck wrote to Van der Meulen:

I am very sorry that next Monday I can't be among your audience. We are in the midst of packing up our household. We will go to live in Lugano in a *pension*, with many books and a few items that are very dear to us. You have no idea what we have to arrange and give away. Actually it is a most troublesome time and both of us are sometimes hopelessly mentally fatigued. We feel old (but hope that Tessin will rejuvenate us).<sup>27</sup> We can't even think of paying farewell visits or receiving people. Perhaps we will visit you later in the low countries. So, *sans adieux*. During this very troubled time we get lots of help from our faithful little friend of the Ortt family. But, we will wander about (Montreux, Oberland, Zug, Vierwaldstätter area) during May and June.

Your very old friend, C. C. U.

The Amersfoort Civil Registry shows that the Uhlenbecks would officially depart on April 1, 1936; Lugano is noted as their next abode and April 20 as their final departure date. The Uhlenbecks' sojourn of four years in Nijmegen was short; their six-year stay in Amersfoort was not much longer. What caused the time to be so "very troubled?" The August 1951



obituary 'Professor Dr. C. C. Uhlenbeck †', by "Dr. W.F." in the *Velberter Zeitung* merely states that Uhlenbeck had left the country in 1936 because of "unerquicklichen Verhältnisse."

### Last Years in Lugano (1936-1951)

After a few months of traveling in the summer of 1936 the couple settled in Villa Eugenia, Lugano-Ruvigliano, in the Italian-speaking canton of Ticino (Tessin) in Switzerland, where from September 23, 1936 on the correspondence picked up again. Uhlenbeck wrote then to Van der Meulen:



*Pension Villa Eugenia, Lugano-Ruvigliano; undated postcard. Courtesy Jan Noordegraaf*

For a long time I have been planning to write to you about the pleasure with which we (the mrs. and me!) have read your very nice *Ha Sekpena-na bakiw* study. My teacher Cosijn would have said: *rem acu tetigisti*.<sup>28</sup> We are doing fine and starting to feel at home here in Ticino. [Learning] Italian is not progressing much. Too old (not the Italian [language] but I am). Also, my heart is inclined towards Indians and Eskimos. I have to cope with it.

On September 29, 1936 Uhlenbeck wrote a lengthy letter to his nephew Dick regarding the family history, adding:<sup>29</sup>

Slowly we are starting to feel much more at home here. I write again for linguistic journals, just as I used to do in the Wijersstraat and earlier on. They are small articles though, because I need to take so much time for my walking and then resting from the walk. Willy is completely happy here. *Und dass ist die Hauptsache.* We do actually love the snowy mountains most but to live near them is too difficult for us [...]. Elsje Ortt stayed here for about twelve days. Dono [Elsje's brother] and his mother also visited us for a few days. We also had a few pleasant days with my Copenhagen colleague, Otto Jespersen, who spent a few days in Lugano-Paradise. In general we have more visitors and company here than in Amersfoort and Nijmegen. Best wishes [...]. As always your dedicated Kees.

Letters to nephew Dick are the only letters Uhlenbeck signed with "Kees".

But on October 17, 1936, after having thanked the Dutch author Albert Verwey for the prose and poetry he had sent, Uhlenbeck confided: "We do not have many friends."<sup>30</sup>

On November 6, 1936 Uhlenbeck wrote again to his nephew Dick:

Thanks for your congratulations. Seventy is old. But, never say die. That is why I diligently work (meaning, a few hours per day, because I cannot longer keep it up) at *A concise grammar of the Blackfoot language* (the title will perhaps be a bit different, but that is not important). Furthermore, we walk and I read professional literature while Willy reads or crochets. Eating is a very important part of our lives. To savor the tasty desserts that are served is a courteous duty. Highlight of every day is the tea hour. Sometimes the weather is somewhat foggy [...].

In his next letter to Dick, Uhlenbeck wrote about a dinner, "very decent indeed", in honour of Princess Juliana and Prince Bernhard's wedding, which had taken place on January 7, 1937. Social life was picking up! Uhlenbeck had been seated next to the Dutch consul and Willy had been seated next to the latter's niece.

On March 3 he informed his nephew Dick that the Royal Academy found it an honour to publish his *Concise Grammar of Blackfoot* and that they had made splendid trips, exploring the Lakes Como and Maggiore. The weather had not been nice, but:

We are high and dry here, *such is life*, my friend Cremer would say. On March 13 Willy turned 75 years old. Time flies. Beautiful flowers from Joke and Willem, from the Wassenaers (consul and wife, whom we have befriended). Many letters, especially from the Spengler children and grandchildren.

But his restlessness did act up again. On November 17, 1937, Uhlenbeck wrote to Van der Meulen, after thanking him for some offprints he had sent:

Reading your explanation of the Reinaert images [...] I saw Blackfoot scenes before me [...]. You will probably know that my Blackfoot grammar is at the printer's. It is

marvelous that De Josselin de Jong took care of the corrections. Perhaps you don't know that on July 1 we will be leaving Ticino. We have thought a lot about relocating to Berner Oberland, but in the winter it is too cold there and too snowy. That's why we have decided to settle in Clarens-Montreux. We know that area very well and during the winter it is no colder there than here in Ticino.

None of Uhlenbeck's letters, though, show that he and his wife did indeed move to Clarens-Montreux. A postcard to Van der Meulen, dated January 8, 1938, has Lugano-Ruvigliana as their address.

By the end of that same year, on December 12, 1938 Uhlenbeck wrote to Van der Meulen: "All in all we are doing fine. This summer we have traveled [unreadable] to extend our knowledge of Switzerland. I systematically reread the Russian classics. I also read a lot of professional literature and teach Sanskrit to Lady Ortt! [...] Best wishes from '*ein verecktes Ehepaar*'."

On May 1, 1940, nine days before the Germans invaded the Netherlands, Uhlenbeck thanked Vogel for his congratulations on the fiftieth anniversary of his dissertation:

Indeed, not long ago, it is over fifty years ago, that I defended my very mediocre dissertation before our old guru \_\_\_\_\_ a [Professor Kern]. I had forgotten about it until a few more people congratulated me about it. At the beginning I did not realize what it was for. Thank you so much for your congratulations. Everyone desires 'happiness,' even if that person does not care about anniversaries. About the circumstances of our time I want to say much. I rejoice that the Netherlands is in a state of siege because, "*if you err, it is better to err on the safe side,*" don't you think so? We experience a certain pressure as well. It is not just the Germans. There are also other threatening Brontosaurus. In the end the \_\_\_\_\_ sâ is the only world vision in which we find peace and satisfaction. What will become of this world? So \_\_\_\_\_ ga veda, yadi vâ na veda [He (who surveys this world in the highest heaven) is the only one who knows, or perhaps even he doesn't].

During the ensuing wartime, we only have the few letters Uhlenbeck addressed to his two favourite former students, Van der Meulen and Vogel, and one to a former colleague. The issues dealt with reflect the effects of WWII. Living on a slope overlooking glorious Lake Lugano in the neutral country of Switzerland did not prevent the Uhlenbecks from some suffering. Uhlenbeck mentions that his pension allowance was not coming through, that he had to live on borrowed money; that his "big treatise" on Eskimo was not being published because the publisher of *Anthropos* lacked the funds. On June 20, 1944, he wrote to Vogel:

We are doing well. Since 1943 we have lived on Bern loans in our pension. But we could not pay our Swiss taxes, so now we are in debt for about 3000 fr. Now the legal traffic will be restored soon; we will overcome this difficult time and be able

to fulfill our duties to Switzerland. My big treatise on Eskimo will be published in *Anthropos*, but it takes time.<sup>31</sup>

On May 23, 1946 Uhlenbeck expressed his feelings about the German “usurpers”, whom, on a much earlier occasion, he had called “our German neighbors [...] that strong family of warlike heroes who once spread fear throughout Europe” in a letter, in English, to Leonard Bloomfield (1887-1949):

You want me to tell about our selves. My wife and myself are getting pretty old (I am in the eightieth year of my life), but we are in tolerable health and enjoy the beauties of this wonderful country. I am interested in linguistics just as much as ever, and am sending you with the same mail a paper of mine on the oldest layers of the Basque vocabulary, which may perhaps be of some interest to you. After a few weeks I hope to send you two other reprints, one on the Basque language, the other one on ancient Indo-European loanwords in Eskimo (perhaps you know Thalbitzers paper on the same subject in “*Travaux du cercle linguistique de Copenhague*,” vol. I, 1945). It was a great satisfaction to me that I was chosen a member of the Royal Academy of Denmark on account of my Eskimo elucubrations of the last decennium. Still we are, and have been, in trouble, even in serious trouble, since the beginning of the war, because we do not, and did not, receive our revenues as regularly as we might have wished. So we are badly in debt here in Switzerland, as the authorities in Holland are slow to send us my pension, etc. Still I trust in a few months the “Deviezenkantoor” of the Bank of the Netherlands will be able to allow us to receive in Switzerland what is due to us. You will understand in what a horrible chaos the German usurpers have left our poor country (as so many other countries).

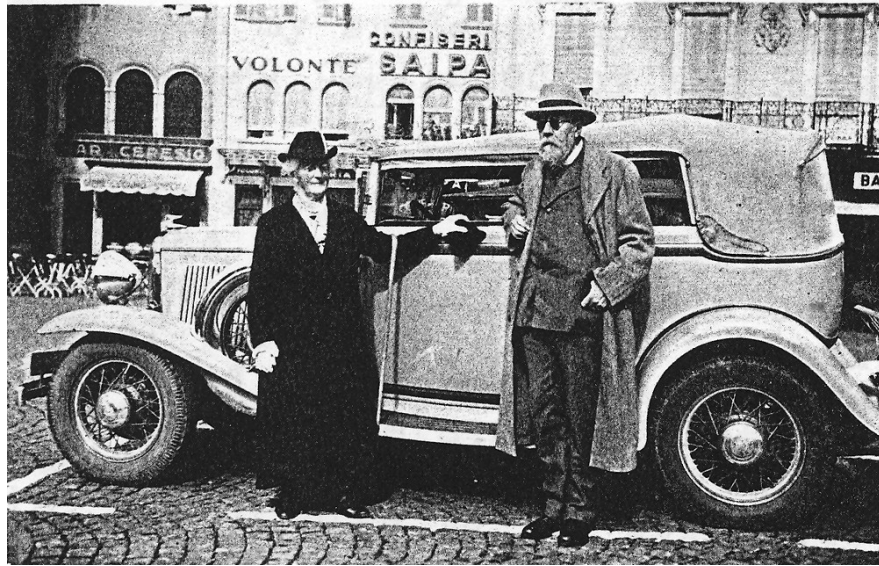
Uhlenbeck’s last letters are to Van der Meulen; in them he seems to be resigned to the decline of his physical health, while holding on to mental occupations. On October 19, 1948 Uhlenbeck thanked Van der Meulen for his birthday wish, news about his career etc. and continued:

We are somewhat the worse for wear, don’t walk far, so don’t see much of the high mountains, but for the rest, we do well. Mrs. reads a lot, mostly about anthropology. I try to keep up with the more and more baffling linguistics. Once in a while I take a Russian [author] under my wing, also the latest. Ticino is a paradise, as long as there is no thick fog.

On October 18, 1950, again to Van der Meulen:

Dear Rein, how very attentive of you to remember the 84<sup>th</sup> birthday of an *old creature*. Thanks a lot for that. We liked so much to hear this and that about you [...]. My Eskimo articles in *Anthropos* are about my last publications; the latest is

from 1950. Our age taken into account, we do well. Fifty years ago you arrived in Leiden and now we have been married for 59 years. *Interea et fugit irreparabile tempus.*<sup>32</sup>



W.M. Uhlenbeck-Melchior and C.C. Uhlenbeck; undated photo. Courtesy Carl Barkman

On January 10, 1951, Uhlenbeck wrote his last postcard to Rein van der Meulen:

Dear Rein. In answer to your 1951 New Years' wishes, I wish you a *cordial altrettanto* 1951. What a pity that Jeannette's recovery goes so slow. I still know some Hebrew, and read Sanskrit (at least epic and regular classic) for a while with pleasure. [...]

Lately it goes *sopāna* – downwards. When I want to read I keep falling asleep, just as La Saussaye used to do.<sup>33</sup> We gratefully accept your congratulations for our 60th wedding anniversary. Imagine, we had not yet thought about it. If I will be reborn, I will do languages again, but have not yet a clue which ones. Our best wishes to both of you.

This last postcard is exemplary for Uhlenbeck, showing his never failing interest in the wellbeing of his correspondents and confirming his never-ending fascination with linguistics. His last line, "If I will be reborn, I will do languages again", reads as if he tried to reach beyond the grave. And in a sense, he just did that: generations later linguists still rely on his remarkable scholarship.

On September 26, 1951 the Van der Meulen family received a short note by Willy Uhlenbeck:

Dear Rein and Jeanette,  
Thank you so much for your condolences. I feel so lonely now. But I have to realize that this "is as good as it gets." If he had been left alone it would have been much worse. Now I have to live with the many memories. We were married for over sixty years, so you know that the end is approaching. Fortunately he died peacefully. He has been cremated in Lugano.

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## NOTES

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<sup>2</sup> See the inventory at the end of this volume.

<sup>3</sup> Uhlenbeck to L.R. Lowie. Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, BANC MMS C-B, 927. Box 14. During the 21th Americanist Congress, Danzel had presented: 'Die altmexikanische Magie im Lichte der neuen reli-

gionsvergleichenden und völkerpsychologischen Forschung' (Lowie 1925:171). Prof. Dr. Danzel died in 1954 in Hamburg.

<sup>4</sup> Uhlenbeck to Huizinga. Leiden, UB Leiden Hui 72.

<sup>5</sup> Translations from Dutch, German and French are by the author of this contribution. Various biographical notes have been added to elucidate matters which may not be immediately clear to the reader.

<sup>6</sup> Uhlenbeck to J.Ph. Vogel. Leiden: Kern Instituut (file 32). All Uhlenbeck/Vogel correspondence is in the Leiden Kern Instituut, and in Dutch.

<sup>7</sup> Uhlenbeck to J.W. Müller. January 9, 1899. Leiden: University Library (LTK 2123).

<sup>8</sup> All Uhlenbeck-Schuchardt correspondence is from the Schuchardt Archives of the University of Graz, Austria.

<sup>9</sup> See Van der Voort and Bakker (2008:11), after having provided some examples from Uhlenbeck's publications: "Just someone with a perceptive mind as Uhlenbeck's could demonstrate such affinity."

<sup>10</sup> RG 75. Central Classified File Blackfeet, file 19420-10-113,1,11E3/7/26/2 Box 22. Archives and Records Administration Washington.

<sup>11</sup> Uhlenbeck to Willem de Vreese. Leiden, University Library (BPL 2398).

<sup>12</sup> *Original Blackfoot Texts* was published in 1911. 'Morphology of the Blackfoot Language' was published in 1914 as 'De Vormen van het Blackfoot'. The Indian "we befriended" was Joseph Tatsey.

<sup>13</sup> Charles Kennedy, Willy's son, e-mailed on July 27, 2007: "The professor supposedly was interested in taking my father to Holland to collaborate on his language studies of the Blackfeet as my father was fluent in the language at that time. After Carlisle [Indian Industrial School] he lost the use of his Blackfeet language as did other students such as my grandfather who also went there 1890-1896."

<sup>14</sup> Uhlenbeck to James Mooney. Washington: National Anthropological Archives Smithsonian Institution. Box 1.

<sup>15</sup> Uhlenbeck to Boas correspondence: Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society.

<sup>16</sup> The term "neurasthenia" was introduced in the 1860's by George Miller Beard, an American neuro-psychiatrist. "Neurasthenia is an accepted condition in Europe and Asia, where it is characterized by fatigue, headache, insomnia and other vague somatic complaints and is thought to result from chronic stress" (Sadock and Sadock 2007:655). Uhlenbeck's or his wife's comments about his condition, which include feelings of exhaustion, fatigue, sleep disturbances, inability to relax and irritability concur with the criteria listed by the WHO of mental and behavioral disorders (ibid:656).

<sup>17</sup> Leiden, UB Leiden (416.1918).

<sup>18</sup> In his letters to J.P. Vogel Uhlenbeck once in a while uses Sanskrit words. Arlo Griffiths kindly helped out with the transcripts and provided the translations.

<sup>19</sup> Leiden, UB Leiden (3501.10). English or Sanskrit in italics reflects original formulations by Uhlenbeck.

<sup>20</sup> All Uhlenbeck-Van der Meulen correspondence is in Dutch and is in the Library of the University of Leiden.

<sup>21</sup> Van Berkel and Eggermont-Molenaar (2005:13) erroneously state "that for reasons unknown to us this prestigious order was not presented to him."

<sup>22</sup> Actually, Uhlenbeck's letters to Willy Kennedy emerged from the basement of "baby" William. We are grateful to William's brother Charles for sharing them.

<sup>23</sup> This is a slight adaptation of Rigveda 10.14.1a, with which CCU probably intended something like 'having passed away, along the great heights.'

<sup>24</sup> Van Gulik was a Nijmegen high school student who had the privilege of being taught linguistics and Sanskrit at Uhlenbeck's place (Barkman and De Vries-Van der Hoeven 1993:25 and Eggermont-Molenaar 2005:13, 14). Later Van Gulik would help out with the publication of the 1930 and 1934 Blackfoot-English dictionaries. The entire letter to Schrijnen is published, in Dutch, by Saskia Daalder (2006:163-172).

<sup>25</sup> In the Van Gulik typescript in Barkman and Van der Hoeven (1993:28), Van Gulik notes that he continued to correspond with Uhlenbeck until the latter's death "many years later, in Switzerland."

<sup>26</sup> In his typescript Van Gulik states that Uhlenbeck requested his help with processing his Blackfoot notes because of his reduced eyesight (Barkman and Van der Hoeven 1993:26).

<sup>27</sup> Tessin is the Swiss canton Ticino.

<sup>28</sup> Erasmus II: 3, 94.

<sup>29</sup> The original letters to Dick Uhlenbeck are in the National Archives, The Hague.

<sup>30</sup> University of Amsterdam. Special Collections HS.XLI B 14358.

<sup>31</sup> *Zu einzelnen Eskimowörtern* was only published in 1950.

<sup>32</sup> Vergil, *Georgica*, Book III, line 284.

<sup>33</sup> Dr. Pierre Daniël Chantepie de la Saussaye was Professor of Religious History in Amsterdam, and, from 1899 to 1916, in Leiden. From Mrs. Uhlenbeck's diary we know that the families befriended each other.