

Guide to the Donald Oenslager Papers

MS 1416



compiled by Staff of Manuscripts and Archives

February 1991

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MS 1416

CREATOR: Oenslager, Donald, 1902-1975

TITLE: Donald Oenslager papers

DATES: 1925-1974

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 52.5 linear feet (34 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers include clippings, albums, photographs, glass slides, and set designs documenting the career of Donald Oenslager as educator and set designer.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1416>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1416>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html. The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Glass teaching slides (14 linear ft.) were transferred 1991 Feb from Accession 86-A-26, Drama School Records, YRG 22-A. Transferred from the Drama Library, 2007.

Conditions Governing Access

Set designs and sketches in the Original accession are unprocessed and may contain sensitive information or be in a physical state that would prohibit use. Researchers wishing to request access should email beinecke.library@yale.edu requesting specific box numbers in order to initiate the review process, which may take several weeks.

All other materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

Preferred Citation

Donald Oenslager Papers (MS 1416). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

Donald Mitchell Oenslager was born on March 7, 1902, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Following graduation from Harvard University in 1923, he was an instructor in scenic design at Middlebury College, Vermont. In 1925, his former Harvard instructor, George Pierce Baker, appointed him to the faculty of the Department of Drama of the Yale School of Fine Arts. Oenslager taught design at Yale until his retirement in 1970. While at Yale, he designed sets for over 250 plays, operas, ballets, and musicals in New Haven, New York, and Europe. Oenslager served as a consultant on theater architecture and design and authored several books on the subject. He was a member of the Art Commission of the City of New York, the board of directors of the American Foundation of the Arts, and the Museum of the City of New York. Oenslager died on June 21, 1975, in Bedford, New York.

Scope and Contents

The papers include clippings, albums, photographs, glass slides, and set designs documenting the career of Donald Oenslager as educator and set designer.

Arrangement

Arranged as received.

Collection Contents

Original Accession, 1941-1974

b. 1	Topical files, A-Z	1941 - 1974
b. 2	Photographs [negatives and slides]	Undated
b. 3	Photographs [productions, A-Z]	Undated
b. 4	Printed material	1946 - 1972
b. 8, 5, 7, 6, 18, 12, 11, 10, 9, 16, 15, 14, 13, 17	Glass teaching slides	
b. 20-22, 19	Set designs and sketches The materials are unprocessed and may contain sensitive information or be in a physical state that would prohibit use. Researchers wishing to request access should email beinecke.library@yale.edu requesting specific box numbers in order to initiate the review process, which may take several weeks.	

Accession 2007-M-055: Additional material, Circa 1925–circa 1960s

This accession consists of set designs created by Oenslager, listed alphabetically by name of production, and by his students, listed alphabetically by student name. The student designs were submitted for possible use in an exhibit of student work in honor of Oenslager in the 1970s.

Works by Oenslager

Set design renderings, may include costume designs

b. 5	<i>The Beautiful Galathea</i> , Central City Opera, costumes designs for Midas and Pygmalion	1951
b. 3	<i>The Birds</i>	Undated
b. 3	<i>Born Yesterday</i> English	1946
b. 3	<i>Candida</i> English	1951
b. 1	<i>Egmont</i> English	1949
b. 1	<i>Fantasy of France</i> English	Undated
b. 3	<i>For Country</i> English	Undated
b. 1	<i>Horses in Midstream</i> English	1953
b. 3	<i>Janus</i> English	1955
b. 1	<i>Lady From Colorado</i> , with libretto by Bernard Stambler and score by Robert Ward English	1964
b. 1	<i>The Leading Lady</i>	Undated
b. 1	<i>Life with Mother</i> English	1948
b. 3	<i>Madam Will You Walk</i> English	Undated
b. 3	<i>Merry Widow</i> English	1967
b. 4	<i>Morals</i> English	Undated
b. 1	<i>My Dear Children</i> English	1940
b. 2	<i>Park Avenue</i> English	1946

Works by Oenslager > Set design renderings, may include costume designs (continued)

b. 4	<i>Peer Gynt</i> English	Undated
b. 4	<i>Pinwheel</i>	Undated
b. 2	<i>Portrait of a Lady</i>	Undated
b. 2	<i>Prescott Proposals</i>	1953
b. 4	<i>The Prisoner</i>	1960
b. 2	<i>A Quiet Place</i> English	Undated
b. 2	<i>Second Threshold</i>	1951
b. 4	<i>Sooner or Later</i>	Undated
b. 2	<i>Three to Make Ready</i>	1946
b. 4	<i>Venus at Large</i>	Undated
b. 2	<i>Whistling in the Dark</i>	1932
b. 2	<i>Yale</i>	Undated
b. 4	<i>Years Ago</i>	1946
Pencil sketches		
b. 6, f. 1	<i>The Abduction from the Seraglio</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 1	<i>And Perhaps Happiness</i> English	1958
b. 6, f. 1	<i>Antigone, American Shakespeare Festival</i> English	1967
b. 6, f. 1	<i>Anything Goes</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 1	<i>As You Like It</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 1	<i>At War with the Army</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 1	<i>Beverly Hills</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 1	<i>The Bo Tree</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 1	<i>Candida</i> English	1951
b. 6, f. 1	<i>Caricoa ??</i> English	Undated

Works by Oenslager > Pencil sketches (continued)

b. 6, f. 1	<i>Choose Your Partners</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 2	<i>Double or Nothing</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 2	<i>Egmont</i> English	1949
b. 6, f. 2	<i>The Fatal Weakness</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 2	<i>The Father</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 2	<i>Galathea</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 2	<i>The Girls in 509</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 2	<i>Goodbye My Fancy</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 2	<i>The Highest Tree</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 2	<i>Horses in Midstream</i> English	1953
b. 6, f. 2	<i>How I Wonder</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 3	<i>The Irregular Verb to Love</i>	1963
b. 6, f. 3	<i>J.B.</i> , Yale University Theatre English	1958
b. 6, f. 3	<i>Janus</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 3	Judith Anderson's Bible series, TV	1955
b. 6, f. 3	Judith's Garden Flower Shop	Undated
b. 6, f. 3	<i>The Lady From Colorado</i>	1964
b. 6, f. 3	<i>The Lady Who Came to Stay</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 3	<i>Land's End</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 3	<i>The Leading Lady</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 3	<i>The Liars</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 3	<i>Lie Down in Darkness</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 3	<i>Life With Mother</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 3	<i>The Live Wire</i>	Undated

Works by Oenslager > Pencil sketches (continued)

b. 6, f. 3	<i>Loco</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 4	<i>Madam Will You Walk</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 4	<i>Marco Polo</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 4	<i>The Men We Marry</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 4	<i>The Merry Widow</i>	1967
b. 6, f. 4	<i>My Dear Children</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 4	<i>Nature's Way</i> English	1957
b. 6, f. 4	<i>One by One</i> English	1964
b. 6, f. 4	<i>Out West It's Different</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 4	<i>Paris '90</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 4	<i>Park Avenue</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 5	<i>Peer Gynt</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 5	<i>The Pleasure of His Company</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 5	<i>The Poor Sailor</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 5	<i>Portrait of a Lady</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 5	<i>Present Laughter</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 5	<i>The Prisoner, City Center</i>	1960
b. 6, f. 5	<i>A Quiet Place</i> English	Undated
b. 6, f. 6	<i>The Rat Race</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 6	<i>Robin Landing</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 6	<i>Sabrina Fair</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 6	<i>Second Threshold</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 6	<i>Shadow of my Enemy</i>	1957
b. 6, f. 6	<i>Small Hours</i>	Undated

Works by Oenslager > Pencil sketches (continued)

b. 6, f. 6	<i>Smile of the World</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 6	<i>Springboard to Nowhere</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 6	<i>Sweet Mystery of Life</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 7	<i>The Temporary Mrs. Smith</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 7	<i>Three to Make Ready</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 7	<i>To Be Continued</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 7	<i>Venus at Large</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 7	<i>Washington Square</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 7	<i>White Haired Boy</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 7	<i>The Wooden Dish</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 7	<i>Writer's Cramp</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 7	<i>Years Ago</i>	Undated
b. 6, f. 7	Miscellaneous, possibly Samoa	1962
Works by students of Oenslager		
b. 7	Amlund, Dale, <i>The Simple Life</i>	Undated
b. 7	Armstrong, Will Steven, <i>Julius Caesar</i> , Stratford	1966
Baranovic, Boris		
b. 7	<i>Die Zauberflöte</i> , two costumes English	1966
b. 7	<i>Dreigroschenoper</i> , costumes for Jenny and Coaxer English	1965
b. 7	Bernard, Jules E., <i>No Exit</i>	Undated
b. 7	Beven, <i>The Merchant</i>	Undated
b. 7	Bianchi, Richard, <i>The Buskers</i> , Cricket Theater, New York	1961
Bohen [possibly Cohen], Michael		
b. 7	<i>Electra</i> English	Undated
b. 7	<i>Resurrection</i>	1958
Bohnert, William. T.		
b. 7	"Bracia and Tybee Dance" for Ed Sullivan Show English	Undated
b. 7	Jerome Robbins ballet, CBS	1958

Works by students of Oenslager (continued)

b. 7	Campbell, Patton, <i>Wings of the Dove</i>	Undated
	Colt, Alvin	
b. 7	<i>Fanny</i> , three costume designs English	Undated
b. 7	<i>Greenwillow</i> , four costume designs English	Undated
	Conklin, John M.	
b. 7	<i>The Balcony</i> , Hartford Stage Co.	1966
b. 7	<i>The Spy Who Came in From the Cold Place</i>	Undated
b. 7	Dancy, V., <i>Othello Verdi</i>	
b. 7	Darling, Robert, <i>Aida</i> , act 2	Undated
	Elder, Eldon	
b. 8	<i>Dear Brutus</i> English	1958
b. 8	<i>Morning Sun</i> , Phoenix Theater, New York English	1963
b. 8	<i>Shinbone Alley</i>	1957
b. 8	Gesek, Tadeusz, <i>Dialogues of the Caramelites</i> , acts 1 and 3	
b. 8	Goheen, Douglas Scott, <i>The Seventh Seal</i>	
	H (full surname unknown)	
b. 8	<i>Oh Dad, Poor Dad</i> , costume designs English	Undated
b. 8	<i>Commodore Roseabove</i> English	1965
b. 8	<i>Jonathan</i> , scenes 1-3 English	Undated
b. 8	<i>Madam Rosepettle</i> , scenes 1-3 English	Undated
b. 8	<i>Rosalie</i> , scenes 2-3	Undated
b. 8	Harris, James Berton, <i>Othello, Desdemona</i> , Yale Drama School	1966
b. 9	Hastings, Russell, <i>Taming of the Shrew</i>	Undated
b. 9	Helvenston, Harold, <i>Peking Politics</i> , Yale Drama School	1927
b. 9	Hendrickson, George, <i>Oh Dad, Poor Dad</i> , Tulane	1965
	Jacoby, Victor E.	

Works by students of Oenslager > Jacoby, Victor E. (continued)

b. 9	<i>The Dragon</i> , Adelphi University Traveling Theater	1954
b. 9	<i>Ho_Dan_Zo</i> , Columbia English	1936
b. 9	<i>Lilions</i> , Adelphi University English	Undated
b. 9	<i>Night of the Iguana</i> English	1964
Keene, Jay B.		
b. 9	<i>Cradle Song</i> English	1962
b. 9	<i>Everyman</i> , Stephen College English	1957
b. 9	<i>Hedda Gabler</i> English	Undated
b. 9	Kurdt, Raymond T., <i>The Bays Between</i> , State University College at New Paltz	1965
b. 9	L (full surname unknown), <i>The Spy Who Came in From the Cold Place</i>	Undated
b. 9	Leve, Samuel, <i>Peer Gynt</i>	Undated
b. 9	Lowenstein, Henry, <i>La Bohème</i>	Undated
Mason, Richard		
b. 9	<i>Antony and Cleopatra Emobarbus</i> English	1963
b. 9	<i>Don Juan</i> , costume for Death Time English	1962
b. 9	<i>Hamlet</i> , costume for a soldier English	1963
b. 9	<i>King Lear</i> , two versions English	1965
b. 9	<i>Oedipus at Colonus</i> English	Undated
b. 9	May, Henry, <i>Dr. Faustus</i> , Belzebub	1964
b. 9	Mitchell, Robert D., <i>Harry, Moon and Night</i> , American Place Theater	1965
Newton, James		
b. 9	A project, untitled	Undated
b. 9	<i>Tiny Alice</i>	Undated
b. 10	Odle, Dwight Richard, <i>We're Off to the Moon</i>	1963

Works by students of Oenslager (continued)

b. 10	Riggs, Otis, <i>Nantucket</i> , ballet	Undated
b. 10	Rogers, James, <i>Macbeth</i> , Amherst College	Undated
b. 10	Ross, John, <i>High Cockalorum</i> , acts 1 and 2, Yale Drama School	1962
b. 10	Salzer, Beeb, Gounod's <i>Romeo & Juliet</i> , Manhattan School of Music	1964
b. 10	Saxe, Stephen, <i>Porgy and Bess</i> , New York City Center	1962
b. 10	Shaw, possibly Shay, <i>Captain Brassbound's Conversion</i> , acts 1 and 2	Undated
Shirley, Donald J.		
b. 10	"Advertising film" English	Undated
b. 10	"Alka Seltzer," VPI film English	Undated
b. 10	"Don Giovanni," NBC TV English	1960
b. 10	"Mitch Miller Show" English	1951
b. 10	"Rip Van Winkle" English	1963 November
b. 10	"Salem Cigarettes" English	Undated
b. 10	"Sing Along" English	1963
b. 10	Soule, Donald R., <i>Long Day's Journey Into Night</i> , Loeb Drama Center	1966 April
b. 10	Stevens, John Wright, <i>Within the Gates</i>	1966
Stover, Fred		
b. 10	<i>Lakwe</i> , ballet for ABC TV English	Undated
b. 10	<i>Man and Superman</i> English	Undated
Whaley, Russell G.		
b. 11	<i>Belle Lamar</i> English	Undated
b. 11	<i>Carmen</i> , act 4 English	Undated
b. 11	<i>The Tempest</i> , Ariel, Prospero	Undated
b. 11	White, Newton, untitled, acts 1-4	Undated

Works by students of Oenslager (continued)

Wilcox, Richard

b. 12	<i>The Madwoman of Chaillot</i> , acts 1 and 2, Goodman Theater	1964
b. 12	A project, untitled	Undated
Unidentified designer		
b. 12	Act 7, scene 2	Undated
b. 12	Ground row, street scene	Undated
b. 12	Infirmery in convent	Undated
b. 12	<i>Mr. Mississippi</i> , Habima Theatre English	1960
b. 12	Sentry's post at gate	Undated
b. 12	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	Undated
b. 12	Williams, Henry B., <i>In Good King Charles' Golden Days</i> , two costumes	1965
Wills, Mary		
b. 12	<i>Hans Christian Andersen</i> English	Undated
b. 12	<i>Up in Central Park</i>	1966
b. 12	<i>A Project</i> English	Undated

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Drama
Set designers -- United States

Names

Oenslager, Donald, 1902-1975

Corporate Body

Yale University -- Faculty