

**Guide to the Adolph S. Tomars Oscar Hammerstein I Research Papers,
1878 - 1980**

JPB 03-8

Music Division

**The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
New York, New York**

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Descriptive Summary

Title:	Adolph S. Tomars Oscar Hammerstein I Research Papers
Collection ID:	JPB 03-8
Creator:	Tomars, Adolph S.
Extent:	3 linear feet (6 boxes)
Repository:	Music Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Abstract

The papers consist mostly of clippings and notes on the career of Oscar Hammerstein I, compiled by Adolph S. Tomars.

Administrative Information

Access

Collection is open to the public. Photocopying prohibited. Advance notice required.

Publication Rights

For permission to publish, contact the Curator, Music Division.

Preferred Citation

Adolph S. Tomars Oscar Hammerstein I Research Papers, JPB 03-8, Music Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Custodial History

The Adolph S. Tomars Oscar Hammerstein I Research Papers were donated to the Music Division in 1986 and 1988 by Regina Tomars.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and cataloged in 2005.

Biographical Note

Adolph S. Tomars, a sociologist and educator, was born on Feb. 2, 1908 in New York City to Semion and Rose Tomars. He received his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. from Columbia University. Tomars married the former Regina Rubinoff in 1932; they had one daughter, Adrea Ruth. He was a member of the City College of New York faculty and later became chairman of the Sociology Department there. Tomars also taught at New York University and Hofstra University. In 1959, he received a Guggenheim fellowship. He was the author of the book, *Introduction to the Sociology of Art*, published in 1940. He died in New York City in March 1985.

Opera stage director, impresario, and onetime concert singer, Semion Tomars, was born in Bobruisk, Russia around 1876. He sang in Russia, Vienna, and London before coming to the Metropolitan Opera Company at the turn of the century. After 1908, Semion Tomars was stage manager for the opera productions of Oscar Hammerstein I at the Manhattan Opera House and the London Opera House. He was associated with Hammerstein until the latter's death. Semion Tomars also directed productions for the Chicago-Philadelphia Opera Company, the Century Opera Company, and the Society of American Singers. He directed his own companies in London and New York, including the National Opera Guild in 1927, whose mission was to produce opera in English. His wife, Rose, was a Polish born soprano who performed in Steinway Hall in 1934. Semion Tomars died of a heart attack in 1943.

Oscar Hammerstein I, theatrical manager and impresario, inventor, and composer, was born in Berlin on August 1, 1846. Running away to New York at the age of sixteen, he found work in the cigarmaking industry. Hammerstein began to invent devices related to cigarmaking and is said to have made over \$1,000,000 from his inventions. He also edited (some sources say founded) the *United States Tobacco Journal*, which he successfully ran until 1885. His first theatrical venture was writing three one-act comedies in German; these were produced by a New York City local theater in 1868.

In 1870, Hammerstein became lessee and manager of the Stadt Theatre (later the Windsor) in New York City. The Harlem Opera House was the first theater he built; it was completed in 1880. Here he produced operas in English, to artistic and financial failure. Among Hammerstein's other theaters were the Columbus Theatre (1890?), Olympia Music Hall (1895), Victoria Music Hall (1899), and the Republic (1900). He was also part owner of Koster and Bial's vaudeville house, as well as other theaters.

To realize his ambition of presenting grand opera in English at popular prices, Hammerstein built the Manhattan Opera House on Thirty-fourth Street in 1906, competing with the Metropolitan Opera House. Hammerstein also built the Philadelphia Opera House in 1908. In 1910, he was paid a large sum (reports vary between \$1,000,000 and \$2,000,000) by the Metropolitan Opera to cease producing opera in New York and Philadelphia for ten years. Hammerstein then went to England, where he opened the London Opera House in 1911. It failed after its first and only season. He returned to New York and built the American Opera House in 1912, but was legally

prevented from producing opera there. Hammerstein renamed the theater the Lexington Theatre and presented popular entertainments in it.

Hammerstein was married three times and had four sons and two daughters. He died August 1, 1919 in Lenox Hill Hospital due to complications from diabetes.

Scope and Content Note

These research materials consist primarily of clippings and notes compiled by Adolph S. Tomars, son of Semion Tomars, who was an associate of Oscar Hammerstein I. The purpose of the research is unclear. There are a small number of photographs, programs, and letters mostly relating to Hammerstein's theaters. A large portion of the subject files cover subjects such as opera, music, and theater, and includes clippings on personalities from the era of Oscar Hammerstein I, or of those who performed in his theaters. There are also a few production materials relating to opera companies with which Semion Tomars was associated.

Also included are materials relating to Oscar Hammerstein I's career, such as descriptions published by the U. S. Patent Office of his numerous inventions. There are also handwritten notes, probably by Semion Tomars, giving his impressions and recollections of Hammerstein.

Organization

The collection is organized into the following series. They are:

- Series I: Research Notes
- Series II: Oscar Hammerstein I Career Files
- Series III: Subject Files
- Series IV: Oversized

Series Descriptions

Series I: Research Notes, undated

.5 boxes

Arrangement: By Number

The research notes consist of transcriptions largely from British newspapers and books, made by Adolph S. and Regina Tomars at the Newspaper Library of the British Museum. The notes cover Hammerstein's involvement with the London Opera House from 1910 to 1913. There are also several clippings on the London Opera House in the Oversized series.

Series II: Oscar Hammerstein I Career Files, 1878 - 1977

2 boxes

Arrangement: By Topic

This series contains U. S Patent Office printed descriptions of Hammerstein's inventions, most of which relate to cigarmaking, but also include descriptions of wash basins, an exhibition building, a fire extinguishing device, a necktie, and a method of subway ventilation. Included in this series are handwritten notes, probably by Semion Tomars, that give his recollections and impressions of Hammerstein. There are also three letters to Manhattan Opera House subscribers, several programs and clippings on Hammerstein, his theaters, and the Hammerstein family.

Series III: Subject Files, 1906 – 1980 and undated

2.5 boxes

Arrangement: Alphabetical by Subject

This series consists mostly of clippings on arts-related topics, such as opera, theater, and dance, but also includes clippings of book reviews and New York City history. There are a large number of clippings on various personalities who were connected to Oscar Hammerstein in some way.

The series also contains materials for a number of opera companies with which Semion Tomars was associated. These include the Aborn Opera Company, National Opera Guild, and the Yiddish Opera and Operetta Company. Of particular note is the score for the F. Halevy opera, *Die Jüdin (The Jewess)*, presented in Yiddish as *La Juive*, by the Yiddish Opera and Operetta Company in London in 1912, and by the Jewish American

Opera Company in New York in 1921; Semion Tomars was the director of both companies.

There are several photographs of miscellaneous theaters, including “The Corner,” adjacent to Koster & Bial’s theater on Sixth Avenue and Twenty-fourth Street, Theatre Royal, Belgium, and La Scala, Milan. There is also a photo of a portrait of Emma Calvé, by Theopold Chartran.

Series IV: Oversized, 1897 – 1951 and undated

1 12" x 16" box

Arrangement: By Format

This series includes a herald for a New Haven, Connecticut production of *Santa Maria*, a comic opera by Oscar Hammerstein, in 1897, photographs of the Stoll Theatre (formerly the London Opera House), a photograph of Theatre de l’Opera Comique, Paris, and several programs and clippings.

Adolph S. Tomars Oscar Hammerstein I Research Materials

Box/Folder	Description
<u>Series I: Research Notes, undated</u>	
Box 1	
F. 1-10	Handwritten Notes, undated (Includes “notes taken by Adolph and Regina Tomars in the Newspaper Library of The British Museum, London; Oscar Hammerstein I – London; Opera House 1910-1913.” Notes are numbered “515” – “547” and consist of transcriptions from newspapers and books.)
F. 11	Miscellaneous Notes, undated
<u>Series II: Oscar Hammerstein I Career Files, 1878 – 1977 and undated</u>	
F. 12-14	Handwritten Notes on Oscar Hammerstein I, Probably by Semion Tomars, undated (Includes typed sheet titled “Facts the Music-loving Public Should Know. The Reason WHY we have no Real Opera in English at Popular Prices;” also includes reminiscences and impressions of the opera world and experiences at Hammerstein’s theaters.) Inventions, 1878 - 1920
Box 2	
F. 1	Cigar Case, 1878 July 2 (Includes specification for patent 205,482; fragile condition.)
F. 2	Wash-Stand [sic], 1880 Jan. 27 (Includes specification for patent 223,907.) Cigar Machine, 1881, 1883 1881
F. 3	Mar. 8 (Includes specification for patent 238,500.)
F. 4	May 17 (Includes specification for patent 241,540; fragile condition.)
F. 5	July 19 (Includes specification for patent 244,453.)
F. 6	July 26 (Includes specification for patent 244,748.)
F. 7	Aug. 1 (Includes specification for patent 261,849.)
F. 8	1883 Feb. 27 (Includes specification for patent 272,958.) 1884 Feb. 19
F. 9	Machine for Cutting and Piling Cigar Wrappers (Includes specification for patent 293,733.)
F. 10	Machine for Manipulation Cigar Wrappers (Includes specification for patent 293,732.) 1885
F. 11	Machine for Cutting Cigar Wrappers, Apr. 7 (Includes specification for patent 315,408.)
F. 12	Machine for Stripping Leaf Tobacco, Apr. 28 (Includes specification for patent 316,540.) 1886
F. 13	Aug. 24 Machines for Stripping and Booking Tobacco (Includes specification for patents 347,794 and 347,796.)
F. 14	Clutch for Tobacco Stripping Machine (Includes specification for patent 347,795.)
F. 15	Cigar Rolling Machines, Aug. 31 (Includes specification for patent 348,206.) 1887
F. 16	Bath Tub [sic] and Wash Basin, Mar. 29 (Includes specification for patent 360,292.)
F. 17	Cigar Rolling Machine, May 17 (Includes specification for patent 363,065.)
F. 18	Art of Forming Long Fillings for Cigars, Aug. 9 (Includes specification for patent 367,906.)

Adolph S. Tomars Oscar Hammerstein I Research Materials

Box/Folder	Description
	1888
F. 19	Machine for Cutting Cigar Wrappers, Sept. 25 (Includes specification for patent 390,167.)
F. 20	Cigar Rolling Machine, Dec. 25 (Includes specification for patent 395,227.)
	1890
F. 21	Apparatus for Cutting Fillers for Long Filler Cigar Bunches, May 20 (Includes specification for patent 428,208.)
F. 22	Cigar Bunching Machine June 24 (Includes specification for patent 430,644.)
F. 23	Exhibition Building, 1892 Feb. 23 (Includes specification for patent 469,472.)
F. 24	Fireproof Floor, 1895 Dec. 3 (Includes specification for patent 550,612.)
F. 25	Necktie, 1899 Apr. 25 (Includes specification for patent 623,958.)
	1901 June 4
F. 26	Apparatus for Manipulating Cigar Wrappers (Includes specification for patent 675,442.)
F. 27	Process of Cutting and Storing Cigar Wrappers under Tension (Includes specification for patent 675,441.)
F. 28	Smoothing Apparatus for Silk Hats, 1903 Jan. 27 (Includes specification for patent 719,001.)
F. 29	Device for Heading Cigars, 1904 July 26 (Includes specification for patent 765,776.)
	1906
F. 30	Fire Extinguishing Device, May 29 (Includes specification for patent 821,938.)
F. 31	Apparatus for Producing Cigar Bunch Structures, July 17 (Includes specification for patent 826,028.)
	1907
F. 32	Ventilation of Subway, Apr. 2 (Includes specification for patent 848,900.)
	July 30
F. 33	Wrapper Cutting and Transferring Mechanism, (Includes specification for patent 861,835.)
F. 34	Cutting Apparatus (Includes specification for patent 861,834.)
	Nov. 26
F. 35	Cigar Bunch Forming Apparatus (Includes specification for patent 872,177.)
F. 36	Cigar Bunch Rolling Machine (Includes specification for patent 872,125.)
F. 37	Method of Producing Cigar Bunch Structures, Dec. 31 (Includes specification for patent 875,071.)
	1910
F. 38	Mouthpiece and Lip Protectors for Cigars, Mar. 29 (Includes specification for patent 953,419.)
F. 39	Cigar-Making Machine, Aug. 16 (Includes specification for patent 967,187.)
F. 40	Cigar Rolling Machine, Sept. 6 (Includes specification for patent 969,274.)
F. 41	Cigar Binding Machine, Oct. 11 (Includes specification for patent 972,185.)
	1914

Adolph S. Tomars Oscar Hammerstein I Research Materials

Box/Folder	Description
F. 42	Apparatus for Applying Elastic Lip Protectors to Cigars or the Like, Nov. 10 (Includes specification for patent 1,116,419.)
F. 43	Treatment of Tobacco, Dec. 29 (Includes specification for patent 1,122,747.)
	1915
F. 44	Machine for Stripping and Booking Tobacco Leaf, Mar. 30 (Includes specification for patent 1,133,799.)
F. 45	Tobacco Machine and Tobacco Leaf Machine, Apr. 27 (Includes specification for patents 1,137,206 and 1,137,207.)
F. 46	Cigar-Bunch and Process of Making Same, June 8 (Includes specification for patent 1,142,164.)
F. 47	Medical Apparatus, 1917 Apr. 17 (Includes specification for patent 1,222,945.)
	1918
F. 48	Apparatus for Applying Protection Wrappers to Cigars, June 18 (Includes specification for patent 1,269,600.)
F. 49	Cigar Maker's Apparatus, Nov. 19 (Includes specification for patent 1,285,137.)
	1920
F. 50	Process of and Apparatus for Stripping Tobacco Leaf, May 4 (Includes specification for patent 1,338,768.)
F. 51	Suspenders, Nov. 30 (Includes specification for patent 1,360,290.)
Box 3	
F. 1	Letters, 1907 - 1910 (Includes three letters to Manhattan Opera House subscribers, including one that appears to be signed by Hammerstein, and two program fragments for Manhattan Opera House productions.)
F. 2	Programs, 1906 – 1910 and undated (Includes programs and program fragments for <i>Elektra</i> (Opera), Manhattan Grand Opera Company, 1910; <i>Julie Bonbon</i> , Fields Theatre, 1906; <i>Letty</i> , Harlem Opera House, undated; <i>Salome</i> (Opera), Manhattan Opera House, 1909; <i>Rigoletto</i> (Opera), probably Chicago Opera House, undated; Chicago Grand Opera Company member listing, undated.)
F. 3	Programs and Libretto, 1909 (Includes program fragments for <i>Pagliacci</i> and other operas produced at Manhattan Opera House placed within covers of <i>Pagliacci</i> libretto.)
	Clippings, 1890 - 1977
F. 4	1890 1906
F. 5	Nov. (Includes clippings mostly on Manhattan Opera House.)
F. 6	Dec. (Includes clippings mostly on Manhattan Opera House.)
F. 7	1913, 1945 – 1977
	Theaters, 1910 - 1975
F. 8	General, 1913 – 1975
F. 9	Harlem Opera House (New York City), ca. 1957 (Includes photos and slides of exterior.)
	London Opera House (England), 1910 - 1957
F. 10-11	Clippings, 1910 – 1912
F. 12	Stoll Theatre, formerly London Opera House, 1955 – 1957 (Includes clippings and letter from London City Council on proposed site development, June 14, 1955.)
	Arthur Hammerstein, 1927 - 1955
F. 13	General Clippings, 1947 – 1955

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Box/Folder	Description
F. 14	Hammerstein's Theatre (Broadway and Fifty-third St.), 1927 Sept. 30 (Includes invitation to laying of theater cornerstone.)
F. 15	Oscar Hammerstein II, 1949 – 1976 (Includes clippings.)
F. 16	Hammerstein Family, 1946 – 1977 (Includes clippings.)
	<u>Series III: Subject Files, 1906 – 1980 and undated</u>
F. 17	Aborn Opera Company, 1914, 1932 (Includes clippings for Washington, D.C. productions in 1914, and brochure for 1932 season at Imperial Theatre, N.Y.)
	Book Reviews, 1949 - 1976
F. 18	1949 – 1953
F. 19	1955 – 1959
F. 20	1960 – 1967
F. 21	1972 – 1976
F. 22	<i>Century Opera Magazine</i> Clippings, 1914-1915 (Includes clippings mostly of opera singers and several productions.)
F. 23	Dance, 1908, 1975, 1977 and undated (Includes several clippings on dance.)
F. 24	<i>Die Jüdin</i> (Opera) by F. Halevy, undated (Includes annotated, fragile score; "Jewish American Opera Co." written on cover.)
	Box 4
F. 1	<i>Jewels of the Madonna</i> (Opera) by Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari, ca. 1914 (Includes production materials probably for Century Opera Company production.)
F. 2	<i>La Juive</i> (<i>The Jewess</i>) by F. Halevy, 1912, 1921 (Includes brochure, programs, and clippings for Yiddish Opera and Operetta Company production in London and Jewish-American Opera Company in New York.)
F. 3	Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, 1957 – 1973, 1977 Metropolitan Opera, 1906 - 1978
F. 4	1906, 1948 – 1956
F. 5	1957 – 1961
F. 6	1963 – 1965
F. 7	1966
F. 8	1967
F. 9	1971 – 1973
F. 10	1974 – 1978
F. 11	Programs and Fragments, 1955 - 1977 (Includes programs and fragments for <i>Orfeo ed Euridice</i> , 1955; <i>Parsifal</i> , 1956; <i>Der Rosenkavalier</i> , 1956; <i>Gianni Schicchi</i> , 1958; <i>Orfeo ed Euridice</i> , 1958; <i>Jenufa</i> , 1974; <i>Wozzeck</i> , 1974; <i>Elektra</i> , 1975; <i>Dialogues of the Carmelites</i> , 1977; <i>La Bohème</i> , 1977.)
	Music, 1948 - 1972
F. 12	Program Fragments and Notes, 1957, 1972 (Includes program fragments for Boston Symphony Orchestra, Carnegie Hall, and numerous program notes, 1957; The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Alice Tully Hall, 1972.)
F. 13	Clippings, 1948 – 1957
F. 14	National Opera Guild, 1927 (Includes solicitation letter and clippings for company that produced opera in English; Semion Tomars was Executive Director.)
F. 15	New York City, 1951 – 1978 and undated New York City Opera, 1951 – 1980 and undated Clippings, 1951 – 1980 and undated
F. 16	1951 – 1966

Adolph S. Tomars Oscar Hammerstein I Research Materials

Box/Folder	Description
F. 17	1972 – 1980 and undated
F. 18	Program Fragments, 1976 – 1977 (Includes program fragments for <i>Il Ritorna d'Ulisse in Patria</i> , 1967; <i>Pellèas et Mélisande</i> , 1976; <i>Mefistofele</i> , 1977; Adam Guettel in cast of <i>Pellèas et Mélisande</i> .)
F. 19	New York Philharmonic, 1952 – 1965
F. 20	New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, 1949; 1971 Opera, 1932 - 1978
F. 21	1932 – 1953
F. 22	1954 – 1965
F. 23	1966 - 1970
F. 24	1971 – 1973
F. 25	1974 - 1978
	Opera Reviews, 1906 – 1965
Box 5	
F. 1	1906, 1949 – 1965
F. 2	1966 - 1978
	Personalities, 1907 – 1979 and undated
	Clippings, 1907 – 1979 and undated
F. 3	A – B, 1907 – 1972
F. 4	C, 1944 – 1978
F. 5	D – E, 1946 - 1978
F. 6	F – G, 1949 - 1979
F. 7	H- I, 1950 – 1974
F. 8	J – L, 1951 – 1973
F. 9	M – O, 1945 - 1977
F. 10	P – R, 1952 - 1976
F. 11	S, 1952 - 1976
F. 12	T – V, 1908, 1951 - 1976
F. 13	W – Z, 1907 – 1947 and undated
F. 14	Calvé, Emma Photograph, undated (Photo of portrait by Theopold Chartran, 1894, Clark Art Institute.)
	Recordings, 1949 – 1978 and undated
F. 15	1949 - 1959
F. 16	1964, 1972 – 1978 and undated
F. 17-18	Theater and Film, 1907 - 1976
F. 19	Theater Program – <i>The Girl from Up There</i> (Musical) by Gustave Kerker, 1901 (Program for Herald Square Theatre production; fragile condition.)
	Theater Photographs, 1956 and undated
F. 20	“The Corner” (Koster & Bial), undated (Includes photos of theater exterior, Ave. of the Americas and Twenty-fourth St., New York City.)
F. 21	Miscellaneous, ca. 1956 and undated (Includes exteriors of Theatre Royal, Belgium, and La Scala, Milan.)
F. 22	Yiddish Opera and Operetta Company, Limited, undated (Includes prospectus.)
	<u>Series IV: Oversized, 1897 - 1951</u>
Box 6	
F. 1	London Opera House, 1912 (Includes clippings on London Opera House.)
F. 2	Opera, 1908 Mar. 22 (Includes <i>N.Y. Times</i> clipping.)
F. 3	<i>Santa Maria</i> (Comic Opera) by Oscar Hammerstein I, 1897 Jan. (Includes herald for Hyperion Theatre, New Haven, Conn. production; fragile condition.)

Adolph S. Tomars Oscar Hammerstein I Research Materials

Box/Folder	Description
F. 4	London Opera House Photographs, undated (Includes interiors and exteriors of Stoll's Theatre, formerly London Opera House.)
F. 5	Metropolitan Opera House Program, 1921 Feb. 5 (Includes program for <i>L'Oracolo</i> .)
F. 6	Garden, Mary, 1951 Mar. – May (Includes <i>Women's Home Companion</i> profile.) Theater, 1900 and undated
F. 7	Theater Program, 1900 Oct. 1 (Includes program for <i>Fiddle Dee-Dee</i> , Weber and Fields Music Hall, New York City.)
F. 8	Theater Photograph, undated (Includes photo of Theatre de l'Opera – Comique, Paris.)

Separated Materials

Billy Rose Theatre Collection

Photographs:

“The Corner” (Koster & Bial's) exterior (2)
Harlem Opera House