



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

George Oppenheimer writings

1932-1976

*T-Mss 1978-001

Compiled by Diana Bertolini, 2015

Summary

Creator: Oppenheimer, George

Title: George Oppenheimer writings

Date: 1932-1976

Size: 4.4 linear feet (11 boxes)

Source: Unknown.

Abstract: George Oppenheimer (1900-1977) was an American drama critic, screenwriter for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, playwright, author, editor, and one of the co-founders of Viking Press. The George Oppenheimer writings include plays, screenplays, novels, sketches, short stories, criticism, and autobiographical writings. The file on *The Best in the World: A Selection of News and Feature Stories, Editorials, Humor, Poems and Reviews* from 1921 to 1928 consists of correspondence and notes.

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Preferred citation: George Oppenheimer writings, *T-Mss 1978-001. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

Processing note: Compiled by Diana Bertolini, 2015

Related Materials:

George Oppenheimer papers, 1943-1977. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

Creator History

George Oppenheimer was born in New York City on February 7, 1900. He was co-founder of the Viking Press, a screenwriter for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, a playwright, author, editor, and critic. He wrote the play *Here Today* (1932) and collaborated on numerous films, including *Libeled Lady* (1936), *A Day at the Races* (1937), *Three Loves Has Nancy* (1938), *Broadway Melody of 1940*, *I Love You Again* (1940), *Two-Faced Woman* (1941), and *The War Against Mrs. Hadley* (1942), for which he received an Oscar

nomination. He also wrote books on theater including *The View from the Sixties* and *The Passionate Playgoer*.

During World War II he served in India under Lord Mountbatten. There he wrote a column for the Army newspaper entitled "India Ink" and was a staff member of the First Motion Picture Unit of the South East Asia Command. In this capacity Oppenheimer wrote, produced and directed training films and documentaries.

Oppenheimer was the drama critic for *Newsday* for many years and wrote for that publication until his death. He was president of the New York Drama Critics Circle from 1970 to 1972. He died on August 14, 1977.

Scope and Content Note

The George Oppenheimer writings document his extensive and varied writing career. His fictional works are represented with full drafts, outlines, and excerpts from plays, screenplays, revue sketches, short stories, and novels. Oppenheimer's career as a non-fiction writer is well documented with essays, articles, and books pertaining to drama, theatre, and music. There are also drafts for both short and long form memoirs and other autobiographical writings. Many of these pieces are annotated with comments and revisions. The majority of these writings are undated.

One folder contains notes and professional correspondence dating from 1970 to 1974, which concerns the researching, compiling, editing, reception, and sales of the 1973 book, *The Best in the World: A Selection of News and Feature Stories, Editorials, Humor, Poems and Reviews from 1921 to 1928*, (edited by John K. Hutchens and Oppenheimer). Correspondence also pertains to the operations of *The Best in the World's* publishing house, Viking Press, which Oppenheimer co-founded in 1925 with Harold K. Guinzburg.

All writings are by Oppenheimer and collaborators, except where noted.

Arrangement: Writings are arranged alphabetically by title.

Key Terms

Subjects

American drama
Motion pictures -- Production and direction -- United States
Motion pictures -- United States -- 20th century
Theater -- 20th century -- History and criticism
Theater -- Reviews
Theater criticism
Theater critics -- United States -- Biography

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Clippings (information artifacts)
Correspondence
Scripts

Occupations

Critics
Journalists
Playwrights
Publishers
Screenwriters
Writers

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 *Academy Award or The Oscar* undated
- b. 1 f. 2 *The Angel Who Growled* undated
- b. 1 f. 3-4 *Aunt Sarah* 1949-1953, 1975
- b. 1 f. 5-6 *Babes in Arms* undated
- b. 1 f. 7-8 *Backward March* undated
- b. 11 f. 5 *The Best in the World : A Selection of Feature Stories, Editorials, Humor, Poems and Reviews from 1921 to 1928* 1970-1974
- b. 2 f. 1 "The Boltons Go to Brackton" 1957, 1958
Episode of *The Myrna Loy Show*.
- b. 2 f. 2 *The Call Girl Cookbook: The Lickerish Life of Madam Hester Hazen or Two Ways to a Man's Heart: The Lickerish Life of Madam Hester Hazen* undated
- b. 2 f. 3 *Carnival in Flanders* undated
- b. 2 f. 4 *The Collected Works of George Oppenheimer* undated
- b. 2 f. 5 *Come to the City* undated
- b. 2 f. 6 *Condition Critical: Adventures in Playgoing* undated
- b. 2 f. 7 "Credo of a Critic" 1965
- b. 2 f. 8 *A Dozen American Beauties* undated
- b. 2 f. 9 *The End of Uncle* undated
- b. 2 f. 10 *Follies, Scandals, and Other Diversions: Songs and Performers from the Great Theatrical Revue of the 1920s and 1930s* undated
- b. 3 f. 1 *Forty-Five Minutes from Broadway* 1946
- b. 3 f. 2 "The Gift of Language" undated
- b. 3 f. 3 "Goofs and Goofers" undated
- b. 3 f. 4 *Here Today* 1932, 1940
- b. 11 f. 6 "India Ink" 1942-1945
Oppenheimer's "India Ink" column appeared in the service publication SEAC: The Daily Newspaper of South East Asia Command.
- b. 3 f. 5-6 *Lands Ho* undated
- b. 3 f. 7 *Life Begins at 400* undated
- b. 4 f. 1 *A Life Without Gerald* undated
- b. 4 f. 2 *Light a Candle* undated
- b. 4 f. 3 "Linda Offstage" undated
- b. 4 f. 4 "Little Poison" undated
- b. 4 f. 5 "The Look of Cassandra" undated
- b. 4 f. 6 *The Loves of Boccaccio* undated
- b. 4 f. 7 *A Memorial to Adlai Stevenson* 1965
- b. 4 f. 8 *Mirror, Mirror* undated
- b. 4 f. 9 *Money from Heaven* 1958
- b. 4 f. 10 "Mother and Child and Me" undated
- b. 4 f. 11 *Mr. Penguin* undated
- b. 4 f. 12 *Murder by Omission* undated

- b. 4 f. 13 *Music from Above* undated
- b. 4 f. 14 "My Affair with Dolly Madison" undated
Not in the Closet or The Family Tree
- b. 5 f. 1-5 undated
- b. 6 f. 1-2 undated
- b. 6 f. 3 *Nothing Happened*
Out of This World
See: *Use Your Imagination*.
- b. 6 f. 4-5 *Plays, Places, and People* 1966, 1972
- b. 6 f. 6 "Pride of the Lions" undated
- b. 6 f. 7 "Poor Butterfield" undated
- b. 6 f. 8 *The Passionate Moviegoer: A Personal Scrapbook* undated
- b. 7 f. 1 *Rimrock or Wedding Day in Utah* undated
- b. 7 f. 2 *Seascape* undated
By Edward Albee.
- b. 7 f. 3 *The Senator Was a Lady* 1957
- b. 7 f. 4 *The Shadow Box* undated
By Michael Cristofer.
- b. 7 f. 5 *Such Good Company* 1976
Tempest Island
- b. 7 f. 6-8 undated
- b. 8 f. 1 undated
- b. 8 f. 2 "That Reminds Me" 1976
- b. 8 f. 3 "Three Sides to a Murder" undated
- b. 8 f. 4 "The Twins" undated
Use Your Imagination
An adaptation of Cole Porter's *Out of This World*.
- b. 8 f. 5-8 1955-1973, undated
- b. 9 f. 1 undated
- b. 9 f. 2 *Vieux Carré* undated
By Tennessee Williams.
The View from the Sixties
- b. 9 f. 3-5 undated
- b. 10 f. 1 undated
- b. 10 f. 2 *Was This Trip Neccessary?* undated
- b. 10 f. 3 *The Way to Act* 1958
- b. 10 f. 4 *We Two: A Fictional Biography* undated
- b. 10 f. 5 *Who?* undated
Autobiography.
- b. 10 f. 6 *Who Am I?* undated
- b. 10 f. 7 *Wit's End* undated

b. 11 f. 1-4 **Various Writings 1937-1958**

Includes outlines, notes, revue sketches, autobiographical writings, and articles written for *Cosmopolitan*, *McCall's*, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, and the *Saturday Review*.