

Mathias Oppersdorff Collection

Overview of the Collection

Repository: South County History Center 2636 Kingstown Road Kingston, Rhode Island 02881
Tel: 401.783.1328

Title: Mathias Oppersdorff Collection

Dates: 1992-2010, undated

Media: Cassette Tape, Compact Disc, Negative, Paper, Photographic Print, Slide

Extent: 25 boxes, 12.52 cubic feet

Identification: 2019.011

Language: English

Historical Note

Mathias Thomas Oppersdorff was born on September 11, 1935 in Boston, Massachusetts, and died on January 26, 2010 in Wakefield, Rhode Island. Oppersdorff was an internationally known photographer and has three published works: *Adirondack Faces* (1991), *People of the Road – The Irish Travellers* (1997), and *Under the Spell of Arabia* (2001). His work focused on documenting the people of different communities and important moments in history. After being employed as a travel photographer for *Gourmet Magazine* for eighteen years, Oppersdorff retired to Matunuck, Rhode Island. While living in Rhode Island, Oppersdorff exhibited his photographic collections at Hale House, which was previously owned and operated by the South County History Center. The collection was donated to the Center by the estate of Mathias Oppersdorff.

Scope and Content

The Mathias Oppersdorff Collection is composed of three distinct projects: *South County Faces*, portraits of residents of communities in southern Rhode Island; *Stone Walls of South County*, landscapes of the bespoke stone walls found in southern Rhode Island and portraits of local stonemasons; and *Rhode Island Responds to 9/11*, portraits of first responders from Rhode Island who worked during the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the former World Trade Center buildings in New York City. The collection includes slides, a slide carousel tray, photographic prints, framed prints, negatives, postcards, typed documents, handwritten notes, a compact disc, cassette tapes, a printed canvas, and exhibit labels. The collection is an

accumulation of materials that were created and collected by Mathias Oppersdorff between 1992 and 2010.

Arrangement

The records are arranged in three series by thematic photograph collection, which have been further arranged into subseries by material type. The contents of each series and subseries are arranged in original order; some materials have been taken out of original mixed series order and placed into separate series, but have kept original order within the series. The series and subseries arrangement of the records is as follows:

Series I: South County Faces, 1992, undated

Subseries I: Records (Documents), 1992, undated

Subseries II: Negatives (Photographs), undated

Subseries III: Slides (Photographs), undated

Subseries IV: Photographic Prints, undated

Subseries V: Audiovisual Materials, undated

Subseries VI: Exhibition Prints and Labels, undated

Series II: Stone Walls of South County, 2000-2009, undated

Subseries I: Records (Documents), 2000-2009, undated

Subseries II: Negatives (Photographs), 2000

Subseries III: Slides (Photographs), undated

Subseries IV: Photographic Prints, 2008, undated

Subseries V: Exhibition Prints and Labels, undated

Series III: Rhode Island Response to 9/11, undated

Subseries I: Negatives (Photographs), undated

Subseries II: Photographic Prints, undated

Subseries III: Audiovisual Materials, undated

Subseries IV: Exhibition Prints and Labels, undated

Series IV: Personal Papers, 2010

Subseries I: Records (Documents), 2010

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access: Any qualified person doing personal or scholarly research is permitted to utilize materials in the South County History Center collections.

Preferred Citation: [item], Folder [number], Box [number], Mathias Oppersdorff Collection,
South County History Center

Provenance: This collection is an accumulation of records that were collected and arranged
by Mathias Oppersdorff that were donated to the Center from his estate upon his death.

Processed by: Rachel Strashnick

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use: All materials are protected by copyright held
by the South County History Center, and permission to publish or reproduce any item
must be secured from the Center.

Subject Terms

Persons

Oppersdorff, Mathias T., 1935-2010
Baker, Kevin
Brawley, Bruce
Brown, Ellison Myers "Sonny"
Brown, Hiawatha
Champlain, Craig
Chapman, Norm
Gencarelli, Giorgio
Howard, Chip
Leslie, Nancy
Manchester, John
Renzi, Aldo
Sebastian, Amondo
Sebastian, Richard
Spears, Craig
Spears, Jr., Robin
Spears, Sr., Robin
Spears, Sr., Russell
Sweet, Stephen

Subjects

Landscape Photography
Narragansett Indians
Oral History
Photography
Portrait photography

September 11 Terrorist Attacks, 2001
Stone walls
Stonemasonry
Walls

Places

Washington County (R.I.)

Occupations

Photographers
First responders
Stonemasons

Related Materials

Researchers interested in this collection may also wish to consult the following sources in the South County History Center holdings:

Adirondack Faces. Photographs by Mathias T. Oppersdorff and text by Alice Gilborn.
2019.011.0041, Box 1, Mathias Oppersdorff Collection, South County History Center.

Researchers interested in this collection may also wish to consult the following holdings from other organizations:

Mathias Oppersdorff Adirondack Faces Photograph Collection, Adirondack Museum, Blue Mountain Lake, NY (<https://adirondack.pastperfectonline.com/archive/4D19190E-A147-463D-B7DC-252970574073>) - contains other photographs from Mathias Oppersdorff featuring Adirondack residents in the Adirondack Park and surrounding region.

Contents Listing

Series I: South County Faces

Subseries I: Records (Documents), 1992, undated

| Box | Folder | Description | Dates |
|------------|---------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | 1 | South County Faces 1992 | 1992 |
| 1 | 2 | List of Names | undated |

Series I: South County Faces
Subseries II: Negatives (Photographs)

| Box | Folder | Description | Dates |
|------------|---------------|--|--------------|
| 2 | - | South County Faces//35 negs. | undated |
| 3 | - | South County Faces 1 of 4 Negatives | undated |
| 4 | - | South County Faces 2 of 4 Negatives | undated |
| 5 | - | South County Faces 2 of 4 Negatives | undated |
| 6 | - | South County Faces 2 of 4 Negatives & Slides | undated |

Series I: South County Faces
Subseries III: Slides (Photographs)

| Box | Folder | Description | Dates |
|------------|---------------|--|--------------|
| 6 | - | South County Faces 2 of 4 Negatives & Slides | undated |
| 7 | 1 | South County Faces//35 negs | undated |

Series I: South County Faces
Subseries IV: Photographic Prints

| Box | Folder | Description | Dates |
|------------|---------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| 7 | 1 | South County Faces//35 negs | undated |
| 7 | 2 | South County Faces | undated |
| 7 | 3 | South County Faces 2nd Choices | undated |
| 8 | 1 | South County Faces | undated |
| 8 | 2 | South County Faces (Negatives) | undated |
| 9 | - | South County Faces (Negatives) | undated |
| 10 | - | South County Faces (Negatives) | undated |

Series I: South County Faces
Subseries V: Audiovisual Materials

| Box | Folder | Description | Dates |
|------------|---------------|--|--------------|
| 11 | - | Tapes of Interviews South County Faces | undated |
| 12 | - | 1 tape interview South County Faces | undated |

Series I: South County Faces

Subseries VI: Exhibition Prints and Labels

| Box | Folder | Description | Dates |
|------------|---------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| 20 | - | South County Faces Exhibit | undated |
| 21 | - | South County Faces Exhibit | undated |

Series II: Stone Walls of South County

Subseries I: Records (Documents)

| Box | Folder | Description | Dates |
|------------|---------------|--|--------------|
| 1 | 3 | Stone Walls of South County 2000 | 2000 |
| 1 | 4 | Stone Wall Records | 2000 |
| 1 | 5 | Photographs of the Show of Stone Walls at South County Art Association, Helme House // and negatives | undated |
| 1 | 6 | Stone Wall Prints | undated |
| 1 | 7 | Stone Wall Prints & Profiles | undated |
| 1 | 8 | South County Art Association Invitation | 2009 |
| 1 | 9 | South County Art Association Exhibit Invitations (9) | 2000 |

Series II: Stone Walls of South County

Subseries II: Negatives (Photographs)

| Box | Folder | Description | Dates |
|------------|---------------|---|--------------|
| 13 | - | Stone Walls of South County 2000//32 negs | 2000 |
| 14 | - | Stone Wall Project 2000 | 2000 |

Series II: Stone Walls of South County

Subseries III: Slides (Photographs)

| Box | Folder | Description | Dates |
|------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| 15 | - | Kodak Carousel Transvue 80 Slide Tray | undated |

Series II: Stone Walls of South County
Subseries IV: Photographic Prints

| Box | Folder | Description | Dates |
|------------|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| 16 | 1 | Unlabeled Box 1 | undated |
| 16 | 2 | Unlabeled Box 2 | undated |
| 16 | 3 | Unlabeled Box 3 | 2008 |
| 16 | 4 | Unlabeled Box 4 | undated |
| 24 | 5 | Stone Walls of South County | undated |

Series II: Stone Walls of South County
Subseries V: Exhibition Prints and Labels

| Box | Folder | Description | Dates |
|------------|---------------|--|--------------|
| 20 | - | Stone Walls of South County Exhibit, 16" x 20" framed prints | undated |
| 22 | - | Stone Walls of South County Exhibit, 16" x 20" framed prints | undated |

Series III: Rhode Island Response to 9/11
Subseries I: Negatives (Photographs)

| Box | Folder | Description | Dates |
|------------|---------------|--|--------------|
| 17 | - | RI Disaster Relief World Trade Center//“Rhode Island Responds to 9/11”//“A Commemorative Tribute to the Heroes of Ground Zero” | undated |
| 18 | 1 | RI Responds to 9/11//A Commemorative Tribute//Show at the State House | undated |
| 18 | 2 | (4 rolls)//Jay Prete//1 | undated |
| 18 | 3 | (3 rolls)//Cassia Burriss//Eliz. Bober//3 | undated |
| 18 | 4 | (3 rolls)//David Edes V//4 | undated |
| 18 | 5 | (4 rolls)//Norman + Deedra Durocher//Clifton Chappel//5 | undated |
| 18 | 6 | (4 rolls)//Amy James//6 | undated |
| 18 | 7 | (2 rolls)//Cardi Bros.//7 | undated |
| 18 | 8 | (4 rolls)//Alan Quintal//Henry Vellone//8 | undated |

| | | | |
|----|----|---|---------|
| 18 | 9 | (3 rolls)//Patrick Shea//9 | undated |
| 18 | 10 | (3 rolls)//Salvation Army//10 | undated |
| 18 | 11 | (2 rolls)//Selim Suner//11 | undated |
| 18 | 12 | (4 rolls)//Air National Guard//12 | undated |
| 18 | 13 | (4 rolls)//John Buro//Paul Vanasse//13 | undated |
| 18 | 14 | (2 rolls)//Johnston Police//14 | undated |
| 18 | 15 | (4 rolls)//Urban Search & Rescue of the Providence Fire Dept.//15 | undated |
| 18 | 16 | (3 rolls)//EMAR Transport//George Denis//16 | undated |
| 18 | 17 | (2 rolls)//92 pro fm//17 | undated |
| 18 | 18 | (2 rolls)//St. John's Episcopal Church//18 | undated |
| 18 | 19 | (3 rolls)//Paul Ryan//Lincoln Police//19 | undated |
| 18 | 20 | (1 roll)//Gov. Lincoln Almond//20 | undated |
| 18 | 21 | (3 rolls)//Rebecca Viney-Lima RI Hospital//21 | undated |
| 18 | 22 | (2 rolls)//Pilgram Senior Enrichment Center, Warwick//22 | undated |
| 18 | 23 | (2 rolls)//R.I. Red Cross//23 | undated |
| 18 | 24 | (2 rolls)//F.O.P.//24 | undated |

Series III: Rhode Island Response to 9/11

Subseries II: Photographic Prints

| Box | Folder | Description | Dates |
|------------|---------------|---|--------------|
| 19 | - | Contact Prints//RI Disaster Relief for the World Trade Center | undated |

Series III: Rhode Island Response to 9/11

Subseries III: Audiovisual Materials

| Box | Folder | Description | Dates |
|------------|---------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | 10 | RI Responds to 911//CD-ROM | undated |

Series III: Rhode Island Response to 9/11

Subseries IV: Exhibition Prints and Labels

| Box | Folder | Description | Dates |
|------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------|
|------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------|

| | | | |
|----|---|---------------------------------------|---------|
| 20 | - | Rhode Island Response to 9/11 Exhibit | undated |
| 23 | - | Rhode Island Response to 9/11 Exhibit | undated |

Series IV: Personal Papers

Subseries I: Records (Documents)

| Box | Folder | Description | Dates |
|------------|---------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | 11 | Willow Dell Historical Association | 2010 |