

# Guide to the Richard Olney Papers

YCAL MSS 1549



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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** YCAL MSS 1549

**CREATOR:** Olney, Richard, author

**TITLE:** Richard Olney papers

**DATES:** circa 1910-2010

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 23.56 linear feet (25 boxes) + 4 art

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The collection consists of correspondence, writings, original oil paintings, photographs, personal and professional papers, and printed material of American author, editor, and artist Richard Olney.

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

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.olney>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

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

b. box  
f. folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Elysium Press on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2017.

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### Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

## Conditions Governing Use

The Richard Olney Papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

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## Preferred Citation

Richard Olney Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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## Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

Information included in the Description of Papers note and Collection Contents section is drawn from information supplied with the collection and from an initial survey of the contents. Folder titles appearing in the contents list below are often based on those provided by the creator or previous custodian. Otherwise, folder titles are supplied by staff during initial processing.

This finding aid may be updated periodically to account for new acquisitions to the collection and/or revisions in arrangement and description.

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## Richard Olney (1927-1999)

Richard Olney was an American painter, cook, wine specialist, food writer, and editor, best known for books on French country cooking that emphasized seasonal menus and wine pairings. Olney was born on April 12, 1927, in Marathon, Iowa. He moved to France in 1951 to pursue a career as an artist, where he befriended and painted fellow expatriates, including James Baldwin. Olney relocated to Solliès-Toucas in Provence in 1962 and began writing about French country cooking. He authored a monthly column, "Un Américain (gourmand) à Paris," for *Cuisine et Vin de France* in the late 1960s. Olney's first cookbook, *The French Menu Cookbook*, was published in English in 1970, followed by *Simple French Food* (1974). He also edited the 28-volume Time-Life series *The Good Cook* (1997-1982). American chef James Beard mentored Olney and Olney's work later influenced restaurateur Alice Waters. Olney died on August 3, 1999, in his home in Solliès-Toucas, France. His memoir, *Reflexions*, was published posthumously by Brick Tower Press.

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## Scope and Contents

The collection consists of correspondence, writings, original oil paintings, photographs, personal and professional papers, and printed material of American author, editor, and artist Richard Olney. Correspondents include Sybille Bedford, Julia Child, Alexandre de Lur Saluces, Kermit Lynch, J. D. McClatchy, Byron and James Olney, Aubert de Villaine, and Alice Waters. Writings include annotated drafts of *Reflexions* and a published version of *The French Menu Cookbook*, shorter works, recipes, and menus by Olney. The collection also contains wine labels for recipe pairings and a cigar box Olney used to house the labels. Oil paintings consist of a landscape and still lifes, and photographs depict Julia Child, Lulu Peyraud, Olney's artwork, and other subjects. Personal and professional papers primarily contain legal and financial documents. Printed material includes magazines, clippings, and books by other authors.

## **Arrangement**

Organized into five series: I. Correspondence, 1956-2001. II. Writings, 1912-2006. III. Artwork and Photographs, 1927-1998. IV. Personal and Professional Papers, 1955-2000. V. Printed Material, 1910-2010.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Correspondence, 1956–2001

*3 linear feet (3 boxes)*

This series contains Richard Olney's correspondence with colleagues, friends, and family, including author Sybille Bedford, chefs Julia Child and Alice Waters, viticulturist Alexandre de Lur Saluces, author and wine importer Kermit Lynch, poet J. D. McClatchy, and winemaker Aubert de Villaine, as well as his brothers Byron and James Olney.

Arranged alphabetically by correspondent, with unidentified correspondence filed at the end of the sequence.

b. 1, f. 1	"A" general	1978–1994
b. 1, f. 2	"B" general	1978–1999
b. 1, f. 3	Bavoillot, Gisou	1978–1999
b. 1, f. 4	Bedford, Sybille	1976
b. 1, f. 5	Bouzeron, Pamela	1978–1996
b. 1, f. 6	"C" general	1983–2000
b. 1, f. 7	Child, Julia	1973
b. 1, f. 8	Colby, John T.	1997–2001
b. 1, f. 9	"D" general	1983–1998
b. 1, f. 10	"E" general	1978–1998
b. 1, f. 11	"F" general	1976–1998
b. 1, f. 12	"G" general	1962–1999
b. 1, f. 13	Griffin, Guy	1994–1999
b. 1, f. 14	"H" general	1991–1999
b. 1, f. 15	Haas, Robert	1993
b. 1, f. 16	Hamilton, Dorothy	1988–1999
b. 1, f. 17	Harrison, Jim	1993–2000
b. 1, f. 18	Hartley, Ralph	1970–1972
b. 1, f. 19	"J" general	1982–1999
b. 1, f. 20	Jerrell, Robin	1994–1998
b. 1, f. 21	"K" general	1995–1999
b. 1, f. 22	Klein, Bill	1999
b. 1, f. 23	Knickerbocker, Peggy	1998–1999

b. 1, f. 24	"L" general	1973-1999
b. 1, f. 25	Lemonnier, Michel	1975-2000
b. 1, f. 26	Lescher, Susan	1995-1998
b. 1, f. 27	Lur Saluces, Alexandre de	1978-1998
b. 1, f. 28	Lynch, Kermit	1996-1999
b. 1, f. 29	"M" general	1969-1996
b. 1, f. 30	McClatchy, J. D.	1984-1999
b. 1, f. 31	"N" general	1993-1996
b. 1, f. 32	Norman, Jill	1996-1999
b. 1, f. 33	Oberlin, Russell	1998-1999
b. 1, f. 34-36	Olney, Byron	1961-2001
b. 2, f. 37-45	Olney, Byron	1961-2001
b. 2, f. 46	Olney, Doris	1968-1982
b. 2, f. 47-51	Olney, James	1961-1999
b. 3, f. 52-65	Olney, James	1961-1999
b. 3, f. 66	Olney, John	1997-1999
b. 3, f. 67	Olney, Margaret	1956-1998
b. 3, f. 68	"P" general	1963-1999
b. 3, f. 69	"R" general	1986-1997
b. 3, f. 70	Robertson, James	1997-1998
b. 3, f. 71	"S" general	1971-1999
b. 3, f. 72	Stern, James	1973
b. 3, f. 73	"T" general	1973-1996
b. 3, f. 74	"U-V" general	1987-1988
b. 3, f. 75	Villaine, Aubert de	1989-1999
b. 3, f. 76	"W" general	1977-1988
b. 3, f. 77	Waters, Alice	1976-1999
b. 3, f. 78	Ziegmann, Leonard	1997
b. 3, f. 79	Unidentified	1972-1999

**Series II: Writings, 1912–2006***5.09 linear feet (8 boxes)*

This series contains drafts, notes, and other materials related to books, articles, essays, recipes, and event menus by Richard Olney.

Arranged in four subseries: Books, Shorter Works, Recipes, and Menus.

**Books**

This subseries contains drafts and notes for the memoir *Reflexions* and wine history *Yquem*, and one copy of *The French Menu Cookbook* by Olney.

Arranged alphabetically by file title.

b. 4, f. 80	<i>The French Menu Cookbook</i> Heavily annotated by Olney.	1970
<i>Reflexions</i>		
b. 4, f. 81-82	Correspondence and suggested edits	1996–1999
b. 4, f. 83	Excerpt	1998
b. 4, f. 84-85	Partial drafts	1998–1999
b. 5, f. 86-89	Partial drafts	1998–1999
<i>Yquem</i>		
b. 5, f. 90	Articles	1996–1997
b. 5, f. 91	Materials and correspondence	1996–1999
b. 6, f. 92	Newspaper clippings	1997–1999
<b>Shorter Works</b>		
This subseries includes notes, drafts, correspondence, and other material related to articles and essays by Olney.		
Arranged alphabetically by file title.		
b. 7, f. 93	Articles	1975–1999
b. 7, f. 94	"Introduction to the Seasons"	1998
b. 7, f. 95	"Joys of Wine"	1975–1976
b. 7, f. 96	"La Romance Conti" draft	1989
b. 7, f. 97	"Lunch Reservations"	1970–2006
b. 7, f. 98	"Salt in the Kitchen"	1998
b. 7, f. 99-100	Time-Life notes and correspondence	1977–1996



## Recipes

This subseries includes Olney's recipe cards, drafts, and notes, including a cigar box and several wine labels.

Arranged alphabetically by file title.

b. 8	Cigar box Used to hold wine labels for recipe pairings.	undated
b. 9, f. 101-103	Old recipe ideas	1965-1972
b. 9, f. 104-105	Possible recipe cards	undated
b. 9, f. 106-109	Wine labels for recipe pairings	1912-1994

## Menus

This subseries includes event menus and drafts composed by Olney.

Arranged alphabetically by file title.

b. 10, f. 110-113	Event menus	1975-1996
b. 11, f. 114-115	Menu idea cards	undated
b. 11, f. 116	Menu ideas and notes	1982-1999
b. 11, f. 117	Menu ideas notebook	undated

**Series III: Artwork and Photographs, 1927–1998***7.92 linear feet (2 boxes) + 4 art*

This series consists of four oil paintings by Richard Olney and photographs of his artwork, family, and friends.

Arranged in two subseries: Artwork and Photographs.

**Artwork**

This subseries contains three of Olney's still life oil paintings and one landscape oil painting on stretched canvases.

Arranged alphabetically by file title.

b. 12 (Art)	Untitled landscape of Marseille	undated
b. 13 (Art)	Untitled still life	undated
b. 14 (Art)	Untitled still life	undated
b. 15 (Art)	Untitled still life	undated

**Photographs**

This subseries includes photographs of Olney's artwork, including a portrait of James Baldwin, and photographs of friends and family, including Julia Child and Lulu Peyraud.

Arranged alphabetically by file title.

b. 16, f. 118	Baby's record book	1927–1930s
b. 16, f. 119-123	Family and friends	1944–1998
b. 17, f. 124	Family and friends	1985–1989, undated
b. 17, f. 125	Landscapes and still life	1955–1960
b. 17, f. 126-127	Portraits	1953–1970
b. 17, f. 128	Religious imagery	1954
b. 17, f. 129	Vineyard Luncheon photoshoot	undated

**Series IV: Personal and Professional Papers, 1955–2000***2.92 linear feet (3 boxes)*

This series includes papers such as contracts, royalty statements, and materials pertaining to Richard Olney's copyright infringement case against author Richard Nelson.

Arranged alphabetically by file title.

b. 18, f. 130	Address book	1990s
b. 18, f. 131-132	Address books	undated
b. 18, f. 133	Articles and obituaries	1999–2000
b. 18, f. 134	B. Delany and J. Baldwin	1976–1997
b. 18, f. 135	<i>Conference on Gastronomy</i>	1986
b. 18, f. 136	Crematorium papers	1999
b. 18, f. 137	Gallery books	1955–1961
b. 18, f. 138	"Images in memory of Richard"	1999
b. 18, f. 139	<i>Luberon</i> materials	1972–1973
b. 18, f. 140	Obituaries and related papers	1999–2000
	Olney vs Nelson	
b. 19, f. 141-144	Case articles and clippings	1983–1984
b. 19, f. 145-146	Case correspondence	1983–1984
b. 19, f. 147	Conversation transcripts	1983
b. 19, f. 148-149	Court transcript	1983
b. 20, f. 150	Court transcript	1983
b. 20, f. 151	Legal Seminar	1984 May 19
b. 20, f. 152-153	Settlement documents	1984
b. 20, f. 154	Personal papers	1973–2000
b. 20, f. 155	Royalties	1990–1994

**Series V: Printed Material, 1910–2010**

4.63 linear feet (5 boxes)

This series includes magazines and clippings by or about Richard Olney, and books by other authors.

Arranged in two subseries: Magazines and Clippings and Books.

## Magazines and Clippings

This subseries includes *Bon Appetit*, *Cuisine et Vins et France*, and other magazines, as well as clippings from newspapers and magazines.

Arranged alphabetically by file title.

b. 21, f. 156	<i>Bon Appetit</i>	2000 December
b. 21, f. 157	<i>Cuisine et Vins et France</i>	1968 February
b. 21, f. 158	<i>Cuisine et Vins et France</i>	1969 September
b. 22, f. 159-160	Magazine clippings	1970–2000
b. 22, f. 161-162	Newspaper clippings	1970–1995
b. 23, f. 163-165	Magazines	1972–2010

## Books

This subseries includes books collected by Olney featuring his own annotations or inscriptions by the author.

Arranged alphabetically by author or publisher.

b. 24, f. 166	Baldwin, James. <i>Giovanni's Room</i>	1956
b. 24, f. 167	Diner-Out. <i>London Restaurants</i>	1924
b. 24, f. 168	Dubois, Urbain. <i>Ecole des cuisiniers</i>	1926
b. 24, f. 169	Erna/Jacquillat/Frachon. <i>Fines gueules</i>	1992
b. 24, f. 170	Lionel, Heinic. <i>Si Bandol aoc m'était conté</i>	1992
b. 25, f. 171	Lord, Eda. <i>Extenuating Circumstances</i>	1971
b. 25, f. 172	Merrill, James. <i>Water Street Poems</i>	1962
b. 25, f. 173	Modes de Paris. <i>Les princes de la gastronomie</i>	1977
b. 25, f. 174	Pomaine, Edouard de. <i>Le code de la bonne chere</i>	1957
b. 25, f. 175	Tante Marie. <i>La veritable cuisine de famille</i>	1910

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## 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.

### Occupations

Authors -- United States -- 20th Century  
Cooks -- United States -- 20th Century  
Editors -- United States -- 20th Century  
Painters -- United States -- 20th Century

Olney, Richard  
Peyraud, Lulu, 1917-2020 -- Portraits  
Villaine, Aubert de, 1939-

### Subjects

Authors, American -- 20th Century -- Archives  
Cooking, French  
Cooking, French -- Provençal style  
Cooks -- United States -- 20th Century -- Archives  
Editors -- United States -- 20th Century -- Archives  
Expatriate painters  
Food and wine pairing  
Food writing  
Male cooks  
Painters -- United States -- 20th Century -- Archives  
Wine industry  
Wine labels  
Wine writers

### Genres / Formats

Cigar boxes  
Landscapes (representations)  
Menus  
Oil paintings (visual works)  
Photographs  
Recipes  
Still lifes

### Geographic Names

Marseille (France)  
Provence (France)

### Names

Bedford, Sybille, 1911-2006  
Child, Julia, 1912-2004 -- Portraits  
Lur Saluces, Alexandre de  
McClatchy, J. D., 1945-2018