

Guide to the Donald Chase Downes Papers

MS 1453



compiled by Diane E. Kaplan

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Collection Overview | 3 |
| Requesting Instructions | 3 |
| Administrative Information | 4 |
| Immediate Source of Acquisition | 4 |
| Conditions Governing Access | 4 |
| Conditions Governing Use | 4 |
| Preferred Citation | 4 |
| Biographical / Historical | 4 |
| Scope and Contents | 5 |
| Collection Contents | 6 |
| Original accession | 6 |
| Accession 1996-M-071: Additional Material | 10 |
| Selected Search Terms | 12 |

Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MS 1453

CREATOR: Downes, Donald, 1903-

TITLE: Donald Chase Downes Papers

DATES: 1909-1979

BULK DATES: 1945-1979

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 3.75 linear feet (8 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist of correspondence, topical files, personal papers, and manuscripts which document the life of Donald Chase Downes during the early war years and after World War II. The papers highlight Downes's literary work and his research on the case of German General Anton Dostler. Also included in the papers is a copy of Peter Tompkins's journal of his life as a spy in Rome between 1942 and 1944.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1453>

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.1453>.

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

Gift of Polly W. Downes, 1986; and Robin W. Winks, 1995.

Conditions Governing Access

Due to the physical nature of the material, box 3 of Accession 1996-M-071 must be used under staff supervision..

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 Chase Downes Papers (MS 1453). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

Donald Chase Downes was born on September 30, 1903 in Catonsville, Maryland, the son of Joseph Lodowick and Effie Chase Downes. He attended Kent School, Phillips Exeter, and Yale College. He left Yale with the class of 1926 for teaching positions in Great Barrington, Massachusetts and at Cheshire Academy. He returned to Yale in 1930 and again in 1934-1935. After completing his course work, he received his B.A. from Yale in June 1935 and accepted a teaching position at a school on Cape Cod, where he lived for the next five years.

When in April 1940 Downes learned that the school was closing he decided to pursue a career in military intelligence. Downes received a reserve commission from the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) and secured a position as a teacher of English at Robert College in Turkey as cover for his espionage work. From October 1940 to March 1941 he worked for British intelligence in the Balkans, until he was ordered to return to the United States by ONI. He was then employed by the Free World Association from which position he spied on American isolationist groups for British intelligence. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor Downes joined the American OSS, first operating in Washington, D.C. and, beginning in 1943, in North Africa and then Italy and Cairo. Downes's espionage work is detailed in Robin Winks's book, *Cloak & Gown*. Downes returned to Washington in August 1944, his intelligence career all but ended, but returned to Italy in February 1945 as a correspondent for a news agency. Downes remained in Europe at the end of the war, traveling and writing. In 1953 Downes published his wartime memoirs, *The Scarlet Thread*, and the following year collaborated on a cookbook, *With Gusto and Relish*. In September 1955 he was permitted to return to Italy where he continued his writing and achieved public recognition as an author for his spy thriller *Orders to Kill*, *A Red Rose for Maria*, and *The Easter Dinner*. In 1961 he assisted his friend Peter Tompkins in revising his wartime journal for publication as *A Spy in Rome*. Between 1969 and 1975 Downes researched questions of military justice and the prosecution of war criminals. He studied the case of German General Anton Dostler in depth, though he never published the results of his inquiry.

Downes moved to London in 1975 and returned to California in 1980. He died on March 26, 1983.

Scope and Contents

The Donald Chase Downes Papers consist of correspondence, research and other topical files, personal papers, and writings which date primarily from Downes's life after he left the OSS. The files contain no more than scattered references to Downes's espionage work during World War II. The papers, which had been loaned to Robin Winks for his research in writing *Cloak & Gown* by Downes's sister-in-law Polly W. Downes, were received by the Manuscripts and Archives Department as the gift of Mrs. Downes in 1986.

The files are arranged in alphabetical order by record type. The files of correspondence in box 1 include many exchanges concerning Downes's research on Anton Dostler and the history of the doomed Ginny Mission. The correspondence also includes letters concerning Downes's efforts to return to Italy in 1955 and to his work in Beirut. Folder 12 which contains copies of some of Downes's outgoing letters at this time also includes his "promemoria" account of this effort. Boxes 2 and 3 include Downes's research material on military justice and war crimes. There is extensive documentation in these files on the Dostler case including the trial transcript and contemporary press coverage of the trial. Box 3 also contains a typescript copy of Peter Tompkins's journal from 1942 through 1944 and the manuscript for Tompkins's *A Spy in Rome* with Downes's editorial comments. The files also include the photographs which Tompkins intended to publish as illustrations in the book but which the publisher apparently decided not to use.* Manuscripts for Downes's books and unpublished writings fill boxes 4 and 5.

*Anyone wishing to quote from Tompkins's journal must first secure the permission of its author.

Collection Contents
Original accession

| Correspondence | | |
|----------------|---|--------------------|
| b. 1, f. 1 | B - F | 1944-1969 |
| b. 1, f. 2 | G - N | 1955-1979 |
| b. 1, f. 3 | P - U | 1961-1979 |
| b. 1, f. 4 | W | 1969-1977 |
| b. 1, f. 5 | Andress, William, Jr. | 1969 |
| b. 1, f. 6 | Bruce, David A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | 1969 |
| b. 1, f. 7 | Emory, Kent A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | 1969 |
| b. 1, f. 8 | Materazzi, Albert R. A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | 1970 |
| b. 1, f. 9 | O'Brien, Philip J., Jr. | 1969-1970, 1975 |
| b. 1, f. 10 | Ullman, Robert See also: box 1, folder 12 | 1955, undated |
| b. 1, f. 11 | Unidentified | 1954-1978, undated |
| b. 1, f. 12 | Letterbook with "promemoria," | 1955 |
| b. 1, f. 13 | Diaries | 1959, 1969 |
| b. 1, f. 14 | Financial and legal records | 1971, 1975-1976 |
| b. 1, f. 15 | Medical records | 1964-1978 |
| b. 1, f. 16 | Memorabilia | 1921-1968 |
| b. 1, f. 17 | Notes | 1969, undated |
| b. 1, f. 18 | Printed material | 1965-1968, undated |

 Topical files

Dostler, Anton

Topical files > Dostler, Anton (continued)

| | | |
|----------------|---|--------------------|
| b. 2, f. 19 | Downes's notes A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | 1969, undated |
| b. 2, f. 20-22 | Trial transcript | 1945 |
| b. 2, f. 23 | Trial documents | 1945 |
| b. 2, f. 24 | <i>Stars and Stripes</i> -coverage of trial | 1945 |
| b. 2, f. 25 | Italian resistance A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | undated |
| b. 2, f. 26 | Italy: maps and other background information | [1942, 1945] |
| b. 2, f. 27 | Kesselring, Albert A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | 1945 |
| b. 2, f. 28-32 | Military justice | 1907-1965, undated |
| b. 3, f. 33 | Tompkins, Peter: journal A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | 1942-1944 |
| b. 3, f. 34-35 | Tompkins, Peter: "A Spy in Rome," A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | [ca. 1961] |
| b. 3, f. 36-39 | Tompkins, Peter: "A Spy in Rome" - photographs A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | [ca. 1942-1944] |
| b. 3, f. 40 | U.S. Department of Justice: registration statement | 1950-1961 |
| b. 3, f. 41 | War crimes | 1945-1950, 1970 |
| Writings | | |
| b. 4, f. 42 | "Amalfi I"-notebook English | 1947 |
| b. 4, f. 43 | "Beppo," English | undated |
| b. 4, f. 44 | "The Big Game Hunt," English | undated |

Writings (continued)

| | | |
|----------------|--|---------|
| b. 4, f. 45 | "Caldrons Bubble," English | undated |
| b. 4, f. 46 | "The Certificate of Naturalization" ("Miguel") English | undated |
| b. 4, f. 47-49 | "The Easter Dinner," English | undated |
| b. 4, f. 50 | "The Font of Type," English | undated |
| b. 4, f. 51 | "Hotel Marshal Plan/The Mayor of Priapino," English | undated |
| b. 4, f. 52 | "In Marble," English | undated |
| b. 4, f. 53 | "Justice and Liberty," English A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | undated |
| b. 4, f. 54 | "The Keywriting Expert," English A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | undated |
| b. 4, f. 55 | "The Ladies," English A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | undated |
| b. 4, f. 56 | "Ludi von Krazov," English | undated |
| b. 4, f. 57 | "Maria and Marcel," English | undated |
| b. 4, f. 58 | "Mishoui at Tarhit," English | undated |
| b. 4, f. 59 | "Mission to Budapest," English | undated |
| b. 4, f. 60 | "Orders to Kill," English | undated |
| b. 5, f. 61 | "Orders to Kill": filmscript English | 1957 |
| b. 5, f. 62 | "Pino," English | undated |

Writings (continued)

| | | |
|----------------|--|-----------------------|
| b. 5, f. 63 | "The Port Lyauty Pilot's Story," English | undated |
| b. 5, f. 64 | "Queen Victoria's Conquest," English | undated |
| b. 5, f. 65 | "A Roman Tragedy," English A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | undated |
| b. 5, f. 66 | "The Scarlet Thread," English | undated |
| b. 5, f. 67 | "Signora Grossi Goes to Market," English | undated |
| b. 5, f. 68-72 | "With Gusto and Relish," English | 1953-1954, undated |
| b. 5, f. 73-74 | Notebooks | undated |
| b. 5, f. 75-77 | Fragments and unidentified | undated |

Accession 1996-M-071: Additional Material

This addition to the Donald C. Downes Papers is arranged alphabetically by category to parallel the original arrangement of the papers. Materials are similar in type, with the exception of photographic materials in this addition, which have been located at the end of the collection.

| Correspondence [incoming/outgoing and third party letters pertaining to D. Downes] | | |
|--|--|--------------------|
| b. 1, f. 1 | A - I | 1939-1943, undated |
| b. 1, f. 2 | K - M | 1939-1942 |
| b. 1, f. 3 | N - W | 1940-1942, undated |
| b. 1, f. 4 | Allen, R. [Allen, W. Rowland?] | 1942, undated |
| b. 1, f. 5 | Lambert, Mrs. Lloyd | 1941-1942, undated |
| b. 1, f. 6 | Roosevelt, Franklin Delano | 1941 November |
| b. 1, f. 7 | Stone, Grace | 1941-1942, undated |
| b. 1, f. 8 | Ullman, Robert | 1940-1942, undated |
| b. 1, f. 9 | Unidentified | 1939-1942, undated |
| b. 1, f. 10 | Memorabilia | 1940-1942, undated |
| b. 1, f. 11 | Notes | undated |
| b. 1, f. 12-13 | Notes, fragments, miscellaneous | 1941, undated |
| b. 1, f. 14 | Printed material | 1935-1942, undated |
| Subject files | | |
| b. 1, f. 15 | Aliens | 1942 |
| b. 1, f. 16 | America First Committee | 1941-1942, undated |
| b. 1, f. 17-18 | American history [teaching notes] | undated |
| b. 1, f. 19 | Borgese, G. A. [typescript for article, "A.E.F. to Siberia," | 1942 |
| | Chaillaux, Homer | |
| b. 1, f. 20 | Ingalls, Laura | 1942 |

Subject files (continued)

| | | |
|------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| b. 1, f. 21 | International Free World Association See also: box 1, folder 8 | 1941-1942, undated |
| b. 1, f. 22 | Legal/personal [power of attorney, naval appointment] | 1940, 1942 |
| b. 1, f. 23 | National Small Business Men's Association [Illinois Division] | 1941 |
| b. 1, f. 24 | Robert College (Istanbul, Turkey) | 1929-1941 |
| b. 1, f. 25 | South Africa | undated |
| Writings | | |
| b. 2, f. 26 | "The Boy Who Cried Wolf," English | undated |
| b. 2, f. 27 | "Letter from a Pacifist," English | 1941 |
| b. 2, f. 28 | "Mediterranean Front" [book review] English | undated |
| b. 2, f. 29 | "Syria," English | undated |
| b. 2, f. 30 | "Why Help the Censors?," English | undated |
| b. 2, f. 31 | Untitled," | undated |
| Photographs/filmstrips | | |
| b. 2, f. 32 | Individuals, groups of people | 1941, undated |
| b. 2, f. 33-34 | Cruise [possibly Pacific, Southeast Asia] | undated |
| b. 2, f. 35-36 | United States | undated |
| b. 2, f. 37 | Scenic views, rural scenes, Damon House | 1941, undated |
| b. 2, f. 38 | Virginia [filmstrip] | undated |
| b. 3 | United States, Pacific cruise, [ten rolled filmstrips, mostly unidentified] Due to the physical nature of the material, rolled filmstrips must be used under staff supervision. | 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

Espionage
Intelligence service -- United States
Spies
War crimes
World War, 1939-1945 -- Italy

Genres / Formats

Manuscripts (for publication)
Photoprints

Occupations

Authors

Names

Dostler, Anton, 1891-1945
Downes, Donald, 1903-
Tompkins, Peter