



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

Guide to the Lawrence Oschinsky papers, circa 1900 - 1965

Victoria Dale

2019

National Anthropological Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Anthropological Archives
Title:	Lawrence Oschinsky papers
Date:	circa 1900-1965
Identifier:	NAA.2016-26
Creator:	Oschinsky, Lawrence, 1921-1965
Extent:	18 Linear feet
Language:	Records exist in English, French, German, and Spanish.
Summary:	The papers of Lawrence Oschinsky primarily document his research and professional activities from 1940s-1965 as an American physical anthropologist, but include some personal materials as well. The collection contains his published works, dissertations, field notes, correspondence, teaching materials, and many photographs depicting both his personal travels and his research subjects in the Canadian Arctic, Africa, Asia, and other regions.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The papers were donated to the National Anthropological Archives by Lawrence Oschinsky's nephew, Scott Fuller, in 2016.

Separated Materials

Oschinsky's measuring instruments and a number of dental casts were transferred to the biological anthropology collections of the National Museum of Natural History.

Related Materials

The National Anthropological archives holds the records of the Wilton M. Krogman Center for Research in Child Growth and Development.

Processing Information

Processed and encoded by Victoria Dale, 2019.

Preferred Citation

Lawrence Oschinsky papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

The collection is open for research. Access to the Lawrence Oschinsky papers requires an appointment.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Biographical / Historical

Lawrence Oschinsky was born on April 19, 1921, to Lea Pollak Oschinsky and John Oschinsky in New York City. He received his B.A. degree from Brooklyn College in 1943, where he was first drawn to anthropology. In 1947 he received his master's degree in Anthropology from the University of Chicago, with the thesis entitled "Islam in Chicago: Being a Study of the Acculturation of a Muslim Palestinian Community in That City." He attended the University of Zurich from 1947-1950 pursuing graduate coursework in anthropology.

From 1950-1951 he was instructor of anatomy at Makerere College Medical School, in Kampala Uganda, studying the racial affinities of various African tribes. From 1951-1952 he was a Research Student at the University of Cambridge, England. He returned to the University of Zurich in 1952 and received his PhD in Anthropology. His doctoral dissertation, published in 1953, was entitled "The Racial Affinities of the Baganda and Other Bantu Tribes of British East Africa." In October 1953, Oschinsky returned to the United States and began his teaching and research career as an Instructor in Physical Anthropology at the Graduate School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania. He also acted as research assistant to Dr. Wilton M. Krogman, Professor of Physical Anthropology, and took anthropometric measurements of school children for Krogman's child growth research program.

Concurrently, Oschinsky cooperated with police and other agencies in the forensic identification of unknown human remains and cases of disputed paternity. Toward the end of 1953, he obtained a position as a Research Scholar in Physical Anthropology at the United States Educational Foundation in Burma. He spent a year studying the peoples of Burma in relation to those of Thailand, Indonesia, Malaya, and the Philippines. From 1956-1957, he was an Instructor in Anatomy at Howard University Medical School in Washington, DC. During 1957-1958, he was Visiting Lecturer in Physical Anthropology at the University of Arizona, Tucson. In 1958, Oschinsky was offered the position of Curator of Physical Anthropology at the National Museum of Canada, in Ottawa, where he devoted himself to an intensive study of the museum's osteological collections. In 1962 he became a part-time instructor in Physical Anthropology at St. Patrick's College, University of Ottawa. In July 1963, Oschinsky became Assistant Professor, and later Associate Professor of Physical Anthropology, University of Toronto, where he taught for the rest of his career. He died on December 19, 1965.

Oschinsky wrote several scientific papers during these years, culminating in 1964 with the monograph *The Most Ancient Eskimos: The Eskimo Affinities of Dorset Culture Skeletal Remains*. In this book, Oschinsky explored Eskimo prehistory via skeletal specimens.

Chronology

1921 April 19	Born in New York City, NY
1939-1943	Bachelor of Arts, Brooklyn College
1943-1947	Masters in Anthropology, University of Chicago
1947-1950	Graduate Coursework in Anthropology, University of Zurich
1950-1951	Anatomy instructor; studied racial affinities of African tribes, Makerere College Medical School, Uganda
1951-1952	Research student, University of Cambridge, England
1952-53	PhD in Physical Anthropology, University of Zurich
1953	Worked with police and other agencies in the forensic identification of unknown human remains and cases of disputed paternity
1953-1954	Instructor, Physical Anthropology, Graduate School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania Research assistant to Dr. Wilton M. Krogman; took anthropometric measurements of schoolchildren for Krogman's child growth research program.

1954-1955	Research scholar in Physical Anthropology, United States Educational Foundation, Burma (currently Myanmar)
1956-1957	Instructor in Anatomy, Howard University Medical School, Washington, D.C.
1957-1958	Visiting Lecturer in Physical Anthropology, University of Arizona, Tucson
1958-1963	Curator of Physical Anthropology, National Museum of Canada, Ottawa
1962	Part-time instructor in Physical Anthropology, St. Patrick's College, University of Ottawa
1963-1965	Assistant Professor of Physical Anthropology, University of Toronto
1964	Published monograph, <i>The Most Ancient Eskimos: The Eskimo Affinities of Dorset Culture Skeletal Remains</i>
1965 December 19	Died in Toronto, Ontario

Scope and Contents

The papers of Lawrence Oschinsky primarily document his professional life and research on the racial affinities and evolutionary characteristics of various peoples. The collection contains his published works, dissertations, field notes, correspondence, teaching materials, and many photographs depicting both his personal travels and his research subjects in the Canadian Arctic, Africa, Asia, and other regions.

Arrangement

The Lawrence Oschinsky papers are organized into 9 series:

- Series 1: Personal Information and Effects
- Series 2: Correspondence
- Series 3: Education
- Series 4: Research and Notes
- Series 5: Published Works
- Series 6: Writings
- Series 7: Teaching Materials
- Series 8: Photographs
- Series 9: Motion picture film

Selected Bibliography

1954. *The Racial Affinities of the Baganda and Other Bantu Tribes of British East Africa*. Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons Limited.

1959. "A Reappraisal of Recent Serological, Genetic and Morphological Research on the Taxonomy of the Races of Africa and Asia." *Anthropologica*, New Series, Vol. I (1).

1960. With Roy Smithurst. "On Certain Dental Characters of the Eskimo of the Eastern Canadian Arctic." *Anthropologica*, New Series, Vol. II, (1).

1960. "Two Recently Discovered Human Mandibles from Cape Dorset Sites on Sugluk and Mansel Islands." *Anthropologica*, New Series, Vol. II, (2), pp. 212-227.

1960. With Roy Smithurst. "A Preliminary Report on the Odontology and Occlusion of the Eskimos of the Eastern Canadian Arctic." Extrait des Actes du VI Congrès International des Sciences Anthropologiques et Ethnologiques, Paris. Tome 1.

1961. "A Short Note on Upper Lateral Incisor Tooth Crowding Among the Eskimos." *Anthropologica*, New Series, Vol. III (1).

1962. "Facial Flatness and Cheekbone Morphology in Arctic Mongoloids: A Case for Morphological Taxonomy." *Anthropologica*, New Series, Vol. IV. (2).

1963. Critique of *The Origin of Races* by Carleton S. Coon. *Anthropologica*, New Series, Vol. V, (1).

1963. With Wann Langston. "Notes on Taber 'Early Man' Site." *Anthropologica*. New Series, Vol. V, (2).

1963. "The Problem of Parallelism in Relation to the Subspecific Taxonomy of Homo Sapiens." *Anthropologica*, New Series, Vol. V, (2).

1964. *The Most Ancient Eskimos: The Eskimo Affinities of Dorset Culture Skeletal Remains*. Illustrated by A. E. Ingram, The Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology, University of Ottawa.

1964. With P. Gall, J. MacDonald, L. Niemann, M. Spence, and S. Wilson. "Parallelism, Homology and Homoplasy in Relation to Hominid Taxonomy and the Origin of Homo Sapiens." *Anthropologica*, New Series, Vol. VI, (1).

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Physical anthropology
- Physical anthropology -- Early man
- Physical anthropology -- Eskimo
- Physical anthropology -- skeletal remains
- anthropometry

Types of Materials:

- Manuscripts
- Photographs

Container Listing

Series 1: Personal Information and Effects, 1921-1965

0.5 Linear feet

Box 1

Scope and Contents: This series includes personal items such as curriculum vitae, passports, student card, datebooks, passover book dedicated to "Ignatz Oschinsky," receipts, correspondence, card with family photos, and Oschinsky's obituaries and related material.

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Series 2: Correspondence, (bulk 1940-1965)

0.5 Linear feet

Box 1

Scope and Contents: This series is comprised of correspondence to and from Oschinsky in relation to publication of his writings, reviews of his work and requests for reviews of other authors' work, acceptance for university positions, assignments abroad, letters of introduction from university administrators, and interchange between Oschinsky and Wilton Krogman regarding Oschinsky's position as Krogman's assistant from 1953-54.

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Series 3: Education, (bulk 1930-1950)

1 Linear foot

Box 2

Scope and Contents: This series consists of Oschinsky's school records from the level of junior high through graduate school, including coursework, class notes, and syllabi. Materials are in English and German.

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Series 4: Research, (bulk 1950-1965)

1 Linear foot

Box 3

Scope and Contents: This series contains documents and illustrations representing Oschinsky's research, including data tables and charts, resources for his writings, lists of influential anthropologists, correspondence between Oschinsky and co-author Donald East regarding their manuscript, bibliographies from multiple scholarly works, and folders of data and notes compiled by Oschinsky. Also included are illustrations and photographs presumably for a published work. These include a mock up of a book cover for an unpublished work called *New World Aborigines*.

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Series 5: Published Works, (bulk 1957-1965)

1 Linear foot

Box 4

Scope and Contents: This series represents Oschinsky's published works, including two books, nine articles, and two reviews of the work of others (see bibliography for details).

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Series 6: Writings, 1947-1965

1 Linear foot

Box 5

Scope and Contents: This series contains various writings, notes, and drafts of manuscripts written by Oschinsky, including two dissertations: "Racial Affinities of the Baganda..." for the University of Zurich, and "Islam in Chicago" for the University of Chicago. Also included are manuscript notes for several published articles by Oschinsky, and book reviews.

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Series 7: Teaching Materials, 1939-1959

1 Linear foot

Box 6

Scope and Contents: This series consists of a variety of papers, including Oschinsky's teaching materials from Howard University, University of Rangoon, and University of Arizona. Also included are research notes, including a booklet called "Burma Story" about customs and language of the region. In addition, this series contains notes for possible research project, a research grant application and resume, and a copy of the book *Races: A Study of the Problems of Race Formation in Man* by Carleton S. Coon, containing notes, articles, and correspondence between Coon and Oschinsky.

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Series 8: Photographs, circa 1900-1965

12 Linear feet

Box 7-18

Scope and Contents: This series contains both research-related and personal photographs . Included are photos of skulls from various regions, anthropometric photos of indigenous peoples, and many photographs from Oschinsky's travels.

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Series 9: Motion picture film, undated

1 Film reel (16mm)

The film is maintained in the Human Studies Film Archives.

Scope and Contents This series consists of one reel of film relating to "Eskimo controversy."

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