



FINDING AID

THEODOR MULLER DESIGN RECORDS CIRCA 1950-1979

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Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park
National Park Service

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HISTORY

All major work undertaken on the Woodstock mansion during the first twenty years of ownership by Mary and Laurence Rockefeller was under the direction of architect and interior designer, Theodor Muller. Muller's office was located at 37 Gramercy Park in New York City. His involvement with the house and other buildings on the estate commenced in 1955 and continued through the mid-1970s.

Source: Yocum, Barbara. *MABI Historic Structures Report*, 2001.

Theodor Carl Muller (1904-1990) was highly regarded, primarily as an interior architect and designer, throughout most of his life, with projects mostly in the Northeast, including New York, Washington, and Vermont. However, there is also a history of notable new buildings and major additions. Although trained as an architect, in his early years he also concentrated on fine arts, with several important commissions, one-man shows, and participation in several important exhibitions. During the mid-century years, he involved himself in lighting, furniture, and fabric design, as well as interiors and fine arts. This experience was evidenced throughout his career in designs of furniture and lighting to be custom made for the specific needs of a particular client. Muller's particular and unusual combination of talents and experiences, plus winning the prestigious American Institute of Design award for furniture in 1948, contributed to his extraordinary mid-century success and recognition in New York and his accomplishments over a larger geographic area. Although an extraordinary designer, his work emphasized comfort and grace in living spaces. Thus, he avoided subjecting his clientele to the modernist experiments and inventions of his most notable contemporaries. As a result, his designs have proven their ability to transcend any particular trend of the day and many of his interiors, though they clearly evoke the spirit of an age that has passed, have survived nearly intact until now. Their survival is for reasons of continued good service with an enduring, attractive appearance, whereas many important modernist designs are preserved primarily as an historical statement. In this manner, Theodor Muller continued the design approach attributed to his former employer and colleague, Dorothy Draper.

Source: Straus-Edwards, Lydia., AIA, NCARB. *Biographical Sketch of Theodor Muller*, 2008.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

THEODOR MULLER DESIGN RECORDS CIRCA 1950-1979

<i>CATALOG NUMBER</i>	MABI 11271
<i>VOLUME</i>	2.25 Linear Feet
<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	<p>Original design documents from the estate of the late Theodor Muller (1904-1990), donated by his son, Carl Anton Muller. Documents pertain to the renovations at the Rockefellers' Woodstock property from the late 1950s through the 1970s.</p> <p>The collection contains one document box of fabric and wallpaper swatches and correspondence; two document boxes of photographs, slides and negatives; four folders of oversize photographs; and sixteen oversize folders of architectural drawings.</p>
<i>ORGANIZATION</i>	<p>Organized into three series by type of material.</p> <p>Series I: Architectural drawings Series II: Photographs, slides and negatives Series III: Material samples</p> <p>Each series is subdivided according to building/location</p>
<i>PROVENANCE</i>	<p>This collection was assembled by Theodor Muller during his employment by the Rockefellers. His son, Carl Anton Muller, donated the papers following his father's death.</p> <p>Lydia Straus-Edwards, the archivist in charge of preparing this donation, was employed by Ted Muller early in her career. She helped prepare some of the original drawings in this donation. These papers were part of the contents of Theodor Muller's home office (a garden studio) in Westport, CT. The papers were cleaned out and dispersed to various recipients in 2007-2008.</p>
<i>RESTRICTIONS</i>	NO

HIERARCHY

I. ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS, Circa 1950-1979

II. PHOTOGRAPHS, SLIDES AND NEGATIVES, Circa 1955-1979

III. MATERIAL SAMPLES, Circa 1978

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

I. ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS, Circa 1950-1979

Arranged according to location (building and floor)

Design drawings on tracing paper and diazo prints

II. PHOTOGRAPHS, SLIDES AND NEGATIVES, Circa 1955-1979

Arranged by building

Photographs, slides, and negatives documenting the MABI estate and other Woodstock homes.

III. MATERIAL SAMPLES, Circa 1978

Arranged by location

Fabric and wallpaper swatches and related correspondence

CONTAINER LIST

Collection Number	Series Number	File Unit Number	Title	Location
1001	001	01	BELVEDERE FALLOUT SHELTER DRAWINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS	CB, Map Drawer 6
1001	001	02	BELVEDERE DRAWINGS	
1001	001	03	BELVEDERE FIRST AND SECOND FLOOR DRAWINGS AND GREENHOUSE DRAWINGS	
1001	001	04	BELVEDERE BASEMENT DRAWINGS	
1001	001	05	MANSION SERVICE WING DRAWINGS	CB, Map Drawer 7
1001	001	06	MANSION GROUNDS DRAWINGS	
1001	001	07	DOUBLE COTTAGES DRAWINGS	
1001	001	08	BUNGALOW DRAWINGS	
1001	001	09	HORSE SHELTER DRAWINGS	CB, Map Drawer 8
1001	001	10	DESIGN DETAILS DRAWINGS - FIXTURES AND FURNISHINGS	
1001	001	11	MANSION THIRD FLOOR DRAWINGS	
1001	001	12	MANSION SECOND FLOOR DRAWINGS	
1001	001	13	MANSION FIRST FLOOR DRAWINGS	CB, Map Drawer 9
1001	001	14	MANSION FALLOUT SHELTER DRAWINGS AND PHOTOS	
1001	001	15	MANSION BASEMENT DRAWINGS	
1001	001	16	MANSION BATHROOMS DRAWINGS	CB, Map Drawer 10
1001	002	01	OVERSIZE MISCELLANEOUS PHOTOGRAPHS	
1001	002	02	OVERSIZE WOODSTOCK PHOTOGRAPHS	
1001	002	03	OVERSIZE BELVEDERE PHOTOGRAPHS	
1001	002	04	OVERSIZE MANSION PHOTOGRAPHS	
1001	002	05	MANSION INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS	
1001	002	06	MANSION EXTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS	
1001	002	07	MANSION EXTERIOR, GROUNDS, LAUNDRY BUILDING AND CARRIAGE BARN PHOTOGRAPHS	CB, Muller Records, Box 1
1001	002	08	DOUBLE COTTAGES PHOTOGRAPHS	
1001	002	09	BELVEDERE INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS	
1001	002	10.1	BELVEDERE EXTERIOR AND GROUNDS PHOTOGRAPHS	
1001	002	10.2	BELVEDERE EXTERIOR AND GROUNDS PHOTOGRAPHS	
1001	002	11	WOODSTOCK TOWN AND BUILDING PHOTOGRAPHS	
1001	002	12	UNKNOWN BUILDINGS PHOTOGRAPHS	
1001	002	13	GROUNDS SLIDES	CB, Muller Records, Box 2
1001	002	14	MANSION AND GROUNDS NEGATIVES	
1001	002	15	MANSION AND GROUNDS NEGATIVE ROLLS	
1001	003	01.1	WALLPAPER AND FABRIC SAMPLES	CB, Muller Records, Box 3
1001	003	01.2	WALLPAPER AND FABRIC SAMPLES	

