Collection Summary
Title: Nazimova Collection
Span Dates: 1877-1988
ID No.: MSS81203
Creator: Nazimova, 1879-1945
Extent: 1400 items ; 5 containers plus 1 oversize ; 1.8 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Summary: Actress. Correspondence, programs, press clippings, and scrapbooks documenting the American stage and film career of the Russian-born actress Nazimova, particularly during the silent film era.

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.

People
Lewton, Lucy Olga.
Lewton, Nina.
Nazimova, 1879-1945.
Scott, Leona.

Subjects
Actors.
Motion picture actors and actresses--United States.
Silent films--United States.
Theater--United States.

Occupations
Actresses.

Administrative Information
Provenance
The Nazimova Collection relating to Alla Nazimova, stage and motion picture actress, was donated to the Library of Congress by Jean L. Kling, Lucy Olga Lewton, and Val E. Lewton in 1991 and 1992. Additional material from Harry E. Vinyard, Jr., was transferred from the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division in 1992.

Additional Guides

Transfers
Items have been transferred from the Manuscript Division to other custodial divisions of the Library. Some photographs have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division. Sound recordings have been transferred to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division. All transfers are identified in these divisions as part of the Nazimova Collection.

Related Material
Papers of Nazimova's nephew, Val Lewton, who became a film producer and writer, are also in the Manuscript Division.
Copyright Status

Alla Nazimova's literary rights are held by the Glesca Marshall Library, Columbus, Georgia. Jean L. Kling has dedicated to the public all rights, including copyrights throughout the world, that she may possess in the collection. The status of copyright in other unpublished writings in the Nazimova Collection is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The Nazimova Collection is open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Nazimova Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1879, June 4</td>
<td>Born Adelaide Leventon, Yalta, Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>Enrolled in the dramatic school of the Philharmonic Society, Moscow, Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>Studied acting with Stanislavsky; member of stock company, Moscow Art Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>circa 1904</td>
<td>Joined Paul Orleneff's St. Petersburg Players, St. Petersburg, Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>American stage debut with Paul Orleneff's St. Petersburg Players in <em>The Chosen People</em>, Herald Square Theatre, New York, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Stage debut in English in <em>Hedda Gabler</em>, Princess Theatre, New York, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Toured on the Keith vaudeville circuit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Appeared in first film, <em>War Brides</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>Signed a motion picture contract with Metro Pictures Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Produced and acted in film <em>Camille</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Produced and acted in film adaptation of Oscar Wilde's <em>Salomé</em> and of Henrik Ibsen's <em>A Doll's House</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Joined Eva Le Galliène's Civic Repertory Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Joined the Theatre Guild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Acted in last films, including <em>The Bridge of San Luis Rey</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scope and Content Note

The Nazimova Collection, consisting of material relating to the stage and screen actress Alla Nazimova (1879-1945), was compiled by family members and fans. Nazimova, acclaimed for her performances in the dramas of Henrik Ibsen and in Eugene O'Neill’s *Mourning Becomes Electra*, also became a prominent silent film star in the early years of the motion picture industry. The collection covers the years 1877 to 1988 and is arranged in two sections, the Kling-Lewton Papers and the Vinyard Papers.

The Kling-Lewton Papers consist of items compiled by members of Nazimova’s extended family and focuses on correspondence from Nazimova to her sister, Nina Lewton. These letters span the period from 1909, when Nina and her children arrived from Russia, until 1943. Many of the early letters are in Russian, but English translations of most are attached. Nazimova describes details of her life while on theatrical tour, her feelings about various acting projects and fellow actors and directors, and her relationship with actor and director Charles Bryant, with whom Nazimova lived publicly as a married couple although they never married. The correspondence also discusses household matters, including the extensive renovation of her estate in Port Chester, New York, “Who-Torok,” and it illuminates her relationship with Nina and Nina’s children, Lucy Olga Lewton and Val Ivan Lewton. A memoir by Lucy Olga Lewton of Nazimova is filed in a biography section. Other items include press clippings and a few programs.

The Vinyard Papers consist of items collected by Harry E. Vinyard, Jr., who apparently planned to write a biography of Nazimova. The collection contains correspondence, programs, photostatic copies of press clippings, and scrapbooks relating to her career. The correspondence includes letters, 1927-1940, from Nazimova to Leona Scott, a school teacher from New Jersey who was a fan and friend.

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in three series:

- Kling-Lewton Papers, 1877-1988
- Harry E. Vinyard, Jr., Papers, 1905-1959
- Oversize, 1905-1929
Description of Series

**Container**  
**BOX 1-3**

**Series**  
**Kling-Lewton Papers, 1877-1988**
- Biographical notes and writings, correspondence, photographs, press clippings, programs, and other printed matter.
- Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.

**BOX 3-4**

**Series**  
**Harry E. Vinyard, Jr., Papers, 1905-1959**
- Correspondence, press clippings, programs, scrapbooks, and sketches.
- Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.

**BOX OV1**

**Series**  
**Oversize, 1905-1929**
- Photostatic copies of press clippings.
- Described according to the series, folders, and boxes from which the items were removed.
# Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
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</table>
| BOX 1-3  | **Kling-Lewton Papers, 1877-1988**  
Biographical notes and writings, correspondence, photographs, press clippings, programs, and other printed matter.  
Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein. |
| BOX 1    | Biographical material on Nazimova  
Notes, undated  
(4 folders)  
Writings  
By family members  
Kling, Jean L., 1972  
Lewton, Lucy Olga, 1988, undated  
(2 folders)  
By others, 1962, undated |
| BOX 2    | Correspondence  
1909-1945  
(18 folders) |
| BOX 3    | 1966-1978, undated  
(3 folders)  
Printed matter  
Miscellany, 1919, 1931, undated  
(2 folders)  
Programs, 1905, 1917, 1932 |
| BOX 3-4  | **Harry E. Vinyard, Jr., Papers, 1905-1959**  
Correspondence, press clippings, programs, scrapbooks, and sketches.  
Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein. |
| BOX 3    | Correspondence, 1927-1940, 1948-1953, undated  
(2 folders) |
| BOX 4    | Miscellany, 1935, undated  
Printed matter  
See also Oversize  
Programs, 1932-1939, undated  
Scrapbooks  
Compiled by Leona Scott, 1927-1950, 1959, undated  
(2 folders) |
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<tr>
<td>BOX OV 1</td>
<td>Harry E. Vinyard, Jr., papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Printed matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Press clippings, 1905-1929, undated ([Container 4])</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>