Nazimova Collection
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
1996

Contact information: http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact

Catalog Record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm95081203

Additional search options available at: https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms001040

Prepared by Laura J. Kells
Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2001
Revised 2010 April
Collection Summary

Title: Nazimova Collection
Span Dates: 1877-1988
ID No.: MSS81203
Creator: Nazimova, 1879-1945
Extent: 1400 items
Extent: 5 containers plus 1 oversize
Extent: 1.8 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mn95081203
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 LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

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.

Titles
Nazimova papers

Occupations
Actresses.

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
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 Orleanoff's St. Petersburg Players, St. Petersburg, Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>American stage debut with Paul Orleanoff'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 Galliene'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:

- *Harry E. Vinyard, Jr., Papers*, 1905-1959
- *Oversize*, 1905-1929
## Description of Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1-3</td>
<td><strong>Kling-Lewton Papers, 1877-1988</strong></td>
<td>Biographical notes and writings, correspondence, photographs, press clippings, programs, and other printed matter. Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 3-4</td>
<td><strong>Harry E. Vinyard, Jr., Papers, 1905-1959</strong></td>
<td>Correspondence, press clippings, programs, scrapbooks, and sketches. Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX OV1</td>
<td><strong>Oversize, 1905-1929</strong></td>
<td>Photostatic copies of press clippings. Described according to the series, folders, and boxes from which the items were removed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</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  
            Press clippings, 1905-1929, 1935-1936, 1942-1958, undated See also Oversize  
            Programs, 1932-1939, undated  
            Scrapbooks  
            Compiled by Leona Scott, 1927-1950, 1959, undated  
            (2 folders) |
Compiled by Harry E. Vinyard, Jr., undated
(2 folders)

**BOX OV1**

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

**BOX OV 1**

Harry E. Vinyard, Jr., papers
Printed matter
Press clippings, 1905-1929, undated ([Container 4](#))