

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://lcn.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/mm95081203>

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

A description of the Nazimova Collection appears in *Library of Congress Acquisitions: Manuscript Division, 1991*, pp. 36-39.

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

Date	Event
1879, June 4	Born Adelaide Leventon, Yalta, Russia
1896	Enrolled in the dramatic school of the Philharmonic Society, Moscow, Russia
1898	Studied acting with Stanislavsky; member of stock company, Moscow Art Theatre
circa 1904	Joined Paul Orleeff's St. Petersburg Players, St. Petersburg, Russia
1905	American stage debut with Paul Orleeff's St. Petersburg Players in <i>The Chosen People</i> , Herald Square Theatre, New York, N.Y.
1906	Stage debut in English in <i>Hedda Gabler</i> , Princess Theatre, New York, N.Y.
1915	Toured on the Keith vaudeville circuit
1916	Appeared in first film, <i>War Brides</i>
1918	Signed a motion picture contract with Metro Pictures Corporation
1921	Produced and acted in film <i>Camille</i>
1922	Produced and acted in film adaptation of Oscar Wilde's <i>Salomé</i> and of Henrik Ibsen's <i>A Doll's House</i>
1928	Joined Eva Le Galliene's Civic Repertory Co.
1929	Joined the Theatre Guild
1944	Acted in last films, including <i>The Bridge of San Luis Rey</i>
1945, July 13	Died, Hollywood, Calif.

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

Container List

Container	Contents
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) Miscellany, 1877, circa 1882-circa 1899, 1904, 1967-1969, 1976-1977, undated Printed matter Miscellany, 1919, 1931, undated (2 folders) Press clippings, 1906-1908, 1917-1921, 1931, 1939-1947, 1958-1961, 1967-1974, undated 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 <i>See also Oversize</i> Programs, 1932-1939, undated Scrapbooks Compiled by Leona Scott, 1927-1950, 1959, undated (2 folders)

Harry E. Vinyard, Jr., Papers, 1905-1959

Container

Contents

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](#))