

The Nazimova Collection

A Register of Papers Related to Nazimova in the Library of Congress

Prepared by Laura J. Kells



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

1996

Contact information: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/mss/address.html>

**Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress
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Latest revision: 2004-10-28

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

Repository: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Abstract: 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.

Names:

Nazimova, 1879-1945

Lewton, Lucy Olga

Lewton, Nina

Scott, Leona

Subjects:

Actors

Motion picture actors and actresses--United States

Silent films--United States

Theater--United States

Occupation:

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.

Processing History:

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.

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.).

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

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
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
ca. 1904	Joined Paul Orloff's St. Petersburg Players, St. Petersburg, Russia
1905	American stage debut with Paul Orloff'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 Gallienne'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. [Papers of Val Lewton](#), who became a film producer and writer, are also in the Manuscript Division.

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, n.d.](#)
- [Harry E. Vinyard, Jr., Papers, 1905-1959, n.d.](#)
- [Oversize, 1905-1929, n.d.](#)

Description of Series

Container

Series

BOX 1-3

Kling-Lewton Papers, 1877-1988, n.d.

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

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

Correspondence, press clippings, programs, scrapbooks, and sketches.

Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.

BOX OV1

Oversize, 1905-1929, n.d.

Photostatic copies of press clippings.

Described according to the series, folders, and boxes from which the items were removed.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-3	Kling-Lewton Papers, 1877-1988, n.d. 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, n.d. (4 folders) Writings By family members Kling, Jean L., 1972 Lewton, Lucy Olga, 1988, n.d. (2 folders) By others, 1962, n.d.
BOX 2	Correspondence 1909-1945 (18 folders)
BOX 3	1966-1978, n.d. (3 folders) Miscellany, 1877, ca. 1882-ca. 1899, 1904, 1967-1969, 1976-1977, n.d. Printed matter Miscellany, 1919, 1931, n.d. (2 folders) Press clippings, 1906-1908, 1917-1921, 1931, 1939-1947, 1958-1961, 1967-1974, n.d. Programs, 1905, 1917, 1932
BOX 3-4	Harry E. Vinyard, Jr., Papers, 1905-1959, n.d. Correspondence, press clippings, programs, scrapbooks, and sketches. Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.
BOX 3	Correspondence, 1927-1940, 1948-1953, n.d. (2 folders)
BOX 4	Miscellany, 1935, n.d. Printed matter Press clippings, 1905-1929, 1935-1936, 1942-1958, n.d. <i>See also Oversize</i> Programs, 1932-1939, n.d. Scrapbooks Compiled by Leona Scott, 1927-1950, 1959, n.d. (2 folders)

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

Container

Contents

Compiled by Harry E. Vinyard, Jr., n.d.
(2 folders)

BOX OV1

Oversize, 1905-1929, n.d.

Photostatic copies of press clippings.

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BOX OV 1

Harry E. Vinyard, Jr., papers

Printed matter

Press clippings, 1905-1929, n.d. ([Container 4](#))