



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Jennie Moscowitz papers

1907-1943

*T-Mss 2001-011

Processed by Mary Ellen Rogan.

Summary

Creator: Moscowitz, Jennie, approximately 1868-1953

Title: Jennie Moscowitz papers

Date: 1907-1943

Abstract: Jennie Moscowitz was a star of the theater and radio. Her papers, though sketchy, document her life and career as an actress of the stage and radio.

Access: Some collections held by the Dance, Music, Recorded Sound, and Theatre Divisions at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts are held off-site and must be requested in advance. Please check the collection records in **the NYPL's online catalog** for detailed location information. For general guidance about requesting offsite materials, please consult: <https://www.nypl.org/about/locations/lpa/requesting-archival-materials>

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Processing note: Processed by Mary Ellen Rogan. The collection was reprocessed and cataloged with a finding aid written in May 2001.

Creator History

Jennie Moscowitz, nee Silverstein, was born in Jassy, Romania around 1868 or 1869. The oldest of four children she had an early interest in the theater and by the age of 12 was studying at the Conservatory in Jassy, Romania. Her first role, at age 13, was in the role of "Nanine" in *Camille* with Sarah Bernhardt performed for the King and Queen of Romania and on tour in Germany. Jennie came to America at the

age of 18, traveling with a company brought here for the Yiddish stage. It was through this engagement that she acted in the Jewish Art Theater with Jacob Adler, David Kessler and Boris Tomashefsky.

Her first New York role was that of the "blind girl" in *The Two Orphans*. Best known for character portrayals of Jewish mothers, her first English speaking role was in the play *The Melting Pot* with Walter Whiteside. Later, David Belasco gave her a role in his play *The Auctioneer* (1920-1921). Other roles were in *Partners Again* (1923-1925), *Potash and Perlmutter in Society* (1917-1920), *Kosher Kitty Kelly* (1925-1926), *Counsellor-at-Law* (1931 & 1943) with Paul Muni and *Excursion* (1937). At the age of 80, John Golden attempted to find her a role in his upcoming production of *They Knew What They Wanted* with Paul Muni.

In 1928, after a four year absence, she returned to vaudeville in a sketch entitled *Tell It To Sweeney*. Jennie Moscowitz also played on radio in such productions as *Rudy Vallee's Varieties*, *My Boy*, *House on the Hill* and *A Mother's Sacrifice*.

She was married for 58 years to theatrical manager Max Moscowitz and had 4 children. She died on July 26, 1953 at the age of 85.

Custodial History

Donor information about the Jennie Moscowitz papers is unknown. The papers were recataloged from materials in the stacks.

Scope and Content Note

The Jennie Moscowitz papers consist of personal papers, correspondence and scripts documenting the life and career of Jennie Moscowitz. The papers are sketchy and there are large gaps, but they illustrate her role as an actress of radio and the stage. There is some mention of her work in Yiddish theater but this is primarily shown in applications for a Yiddish acting school.

Arrangement: The collection is organized into three series. They are: Series I - Personal Papers
Series II - Correspondence
Series III - Scripts

Key Terms

Subjects

Actresses -- United States
Theater -- United States
Theater, Yiddish -- United States

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Contracts
Correspondence

Names

Moscowitz, Jennie, approximately 1868-1953
McBride, Mary Margaret, 1899-1976

Muni, Bella
Rice, Elmer, 1892-1967

Container List

Series I: Personal Papers 1918-1928 (7 folders, 1 portfolio)

This series contains bank books, contracts, union cards, ephemera, photographs and a story written by Jennie Moscovitz.

- b. 1 f. 1 **Bank books / Max Moscovitz** (1 folder)
Bank books belonging to Max Moscovitz, husband of Jennie Moscovitz.
- b. 1 f. 2 **Contracts / Jennie Moscovitz 1913-1939** (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 3 **Woodrow Court property Papers 1928** (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 4 **Applications / Tytacony 1906** (1 folder)
Applications for students to the Yiddish Acting School.
- b. 1 f. 5 **Union cards / Jennie Moscovitz** (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 6 **The fifth commandment / Jennie Moscovitz** (1 folder)
Manuscript of a story written by Jennie Moscovitz.
- b. 1 f. 7 **Ephemera / Jennie Moscovitz** (1 folder)
- b. 2 **Photograph / Jennie Moscovitz** (1 portfolio)
One oversized photograph of Jennie Moscovitz as "the Jewish mother."

Series II: Correspondence 1907-1943 (17 folders)

This series consists of letters written to Jennie Moscovitz from family, friends and professional contacts. Included are letters from Paul Muni, David Warfield and A. H. Woods.

Alphabetical

- b. 1 f. 8 **Family correspondence / Jennie Moscovitz** (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 9 **Correspondence "A" 1928** (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 10 **Correspondence "B" 1926-1945** (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 11 **Correspondence "C" 1916-1943** (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 12 **Correspondence "D-E" 1943** (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 13 **Correspondence "F" 1937-1945** (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 14 **Correspondence "G" ca. 1943-1949** (1 folder)
Correspondence to Jennie Moscovitz from friends and business acquaintances. Includes correspondence from John Golden.
- b. 1 f. 15 **Correspondence "H" 1943** (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 16 **Correspondence "L" 1917-?** (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 17 **Correspondence / Paul Muni 1932-1941** (1 folder)
Muni, Bella
- b. 1 f. 18 **Correspondence "M" 1918-1943** (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 19 **Correspondence "N-R" 1928-1943** (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 20 **Correspondence "S" 1907-1937** (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 21 **Correspondence "T" ca. 1943** (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 22 **Correspondence / David Warfield 1943** (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 23 **Correspondence / A. H. (Albert Herman) Woods 1915-1926** (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 24 **Correspondence "W-Z" 1938-1943** (1 folder)

Series III: Scripts ca. 1920-1939 (15 folders)

This series includes primarily radio scripts and sides for parts played by Jennie Moscowitz. There are also a few play scripts, including one entitled *Awakening* and another *The Lovers* by Arthur Kober.

Alphabetical

- b. 1 f. 25 *Awakening (Play)* (1 folder)
Script excerpts for a play entitled *Awakening*. Characters include Moe, Sarah and Goldie.
- b. 1 f. 26 *The Auctioneer (Play)* (1 folder)
Side for the role of Mrs. Levi.
- b. 1 f. 27 Benny Leonard (Radio script) / Jennie Moscowitz (1 folder)
Leonard, Benny, 1896-1947--Drama
- b. 1 f. 28 Caruso Macaroni (Continuity script) 1939 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 29 *Counsellor-at-Law (Play)* (1 folder)
Test scene for the play *Counsellor-at-Law*
- b. 1 f. 30 *House on the hill (Radio script)* (1 folder)
Radio script for *House on the Hills* sponsored by Daughters of Jacob.
- b. 1 f. 31 Jolson routine (Radio script) 1933 (1 folder)
Script for a radio routine for Al Jolson.
- b. 1 f. 32 *The lovers / Arthur Kober* (1 folder)
Script excerpt.
- b. 1 f. 33 *Mother Moscowitz (Play)* (1 folder)
Play, possibly for radio entitled *Mother Moscowitz*. Characters include Mother, Simon, Jacob and Sarah.
- b. 1 f. 34 *A mother's sacrifice (Radio script)* (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 35 Side for the part of Mrs. Lezinsky (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 36 Side for the part of Mrs. Rooney (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 37 Side for the part of Mrs. Rosenbloom (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 38 *The shock (Script)* (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 39 *Stylish Stouts (Play)* (1 folder)
Side for the part of Mrs. Kopf in the play entitled *Stylish Stouts*.
- b. 1 f. 40 *A true story of New York life (Script)* (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 41 *The Wooden Soldier (Play)* (1 folder)
Side for the part of Sarah in the play entitled *The Wooden Soldier*
- b. 1 f. 42 Unidentified script fragment (1 folder)
Unidentified script fragment. Characters include Becky, Milton and Rachel.
- b. 1 f. 43 Unidentified script fragment
Unidentified script fragment. Characters include Moses and David.