



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Josephine Nichols papers

1948-1990

*T-Mss 1996-001

Processed by Alicia Ackerman.

Summary

Creator: Nichols, Josephine

Title: Josephine Nichols papers

Date: 1948-1990

Size: 1.25 linear feet (3 boxes)

Source: The papers were donated by Karl B. Holtzschue in 1996.

Abstract: Josephine Nichols was an actress and a teacher of theater. This collection contains her papers from her long career, 1948-1990. The papers are business related, including programs, contracts and clippings.

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>

Conditions Governing Access:

Photocopying prohibited.

Conditions Governing Use: For permission to publish, contact the Curator, Billy Rose Theatre Division.

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Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Processed by Alicia Ackerman; Machine-readable finding aid created by Alicia Ackerman.

Creator History

Josephine Nichols was born Josephine Landsittel, November 11, 1913 in Tulsa, Oklahoma to Clarence and Ola Landsittel. Her married name was Josephine Holtzschue but she was known professionally as Josephine Nichols throughout her career. Josephine Nichols graduated from Central High School in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1931. She went to receive her BFA, major in dramatic art from the University of Oklahoma. After graduating, she spent a year in California working with the Pasadena Community Playhouse Productions, acting in their productions while pursuing radio and advertising jobs. She moved back to the Midwest and spent the next ten years engaged in many forms of theater activities. Josephine Nichols directed several plays for the Little Theatre of Wichita, Kansas while radio acting for the local station. In 1943, she commentated *News for Women* in Wichita, Kansas. In 1945, Josephine Nichols moved to New York to join the group Stage for Action. While she was in the city, she took a course on radio announcing at Columbia University. Upon returning to Oklahoma, she worked as an instructor of speech at a local business college. Josephine Nichols returned to New York City to earn her M.A. in speech and communication from Teachers College, Columbia University in 1948. She became a teacher at Adelphi College in 1949. She was an instructor (adjunct professor) of speech and communication and the director of the Reader's Theater at Adelphi until 1955 at which time she asked for leave to pursue her own acting career. She remained the director of the Reader's Theater until 1966. Meanwhile, Josephine had been working on a Shakespeare Seminar program for Adelphi students that she was able to teach at other institutions. In addition, she offered private lessons on Shakespeare as well. Josephine Nichols continued her theatrical education and became a licensed teacher of the Alexander Technique. She also followed the Bahai' Faith, giving lectures at various locations. For one year, she took a guest lecturer position for a year at Temple University in 1976 where she taught speech and the Alexander Technique. After leaving Adelphi, Josephine Nichols acted in touring productions, small theaters, off-Broadway productions and regional theater. She developed her own one-woman production called *Sonnets and Scenes from Shakespeare* which she took on tour to different venues in the United States including: The Hartford Stage Company and the Jewel Box Theatre in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Regional theater was a great part of Josephine's acting career. She was a member of the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco from 1966-1969 acting in several productions including: *A Delicate Balance*, *The Sea Gull*, and *The Crucible*. She later joined the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre from 1971-1973 acting in among others: *The Cherry Orchard*, *Scenes from American Life*, and *Cat among the Pigeons*. Her other regional appearances include: *The Show-Off* 1977, for the Seattle Repertory Theatre, *Foxfire* 1985, at the Missouri Repertory Theatre and *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* 1988, at the Virginia Stage Company. In addition to regional theater, Josephine Nichols participated in summer and winter stock productions. She spent 6 seasons at the Totem Pole Playhouse, directed by William Putch, taking part in *Southwest Corner* 1971 and other productions. She also took roles at the Meadow Brook Theatre, the Barter Theatre and Summerstage at Trinity College in Connecticut. Josephine Nichols's theater activities in New York included the Broadway production of *Skin of Our Teeth*, 1975 and *Clothes for a Summer Hotel* 1980 both directed by Jose Quintero. She participated in several off-Broadway productions as well, including: *The Golden Six* 1958 and *Uncommon Women* 1977 by Wendy Wasserman. Josephine Nichols's work in film and television ran concurrently with her theater career. Her most noted roles in television include Mrs. Plumm in the televised version of *Uncommon Women* 1978, the Countess in *The Elephant Man* 1982, and matriarch Kate Marshall in NBC's soap opera *Texas* 1980-1982. In film, Josephine Nichols played the mother of James Caan in *Hide in Plain Sight* 1980. She had other roles in film productions of *Petulia* 1968 and *Riverrun* 1968. Josephine Nichols's long career ended in retirement in the early 1990s. She died on February 17, 1996.

Scope and Content Note

The Josephine Nichols Papers consist of papers regarding her career. Any personal correspondence within the collection is related to a production or other aspect of Josephine Nichols' career. There are clippings and programs from productions, notes on teaching and business related correspondence such

as contracts for both her teaching and acting careers. The personal papers are generally business related: resumes, brief biographical sketches and notes. Although Josephine Nichols was a follower of the Bahai' Faith and a licensed teacher of the Alexander Technique, there are very few references to those aspects of her life. The bulk of the papers begin with Josephine Nichols's years at Adelphi College is 1949 and end in the 1990s at her retirement. Josephine's many notes on teaching her Shakespeare Seminar and acting her one-woman production *Sonnets and Scenes from Shakespeare* are in depth and detailed. A few of the productions have snapshots included.

Arrangement: Series I: Personal Papers Series II: Teaching Papers Sub-series 1 - Adelphi College Teaching Reader's Theatre Sub-series 2 - Shakespeare Seminars Sub-series 3 - Temple University Sub-series 4 - AETA (American Education Theatre Association) Series III: Productions Sub-series 1 - Broadway Sub-series 2 - Off-Broadway Sub-series 3 - Film Sub-series 4 - Television Sub-series 5 - Stock and Regional Theater Sub-series 6 - Touring and Miscellaneous Productions

Key Terms

Subjects

Actresses -- United States

Teachers -- United States

Names

Nichols, Josephine

Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616

Container List

Series I: Personal Papers 1949-1990 (9 folders)

This series contains resumes, press blurbs, clippings and promotional materials used in the course of Josephine Nichols's career. There are a few papers from the courses she took and also included is a short (2 pg.) memoir by Josephine about her training in acting.

- b. 1 f. 1 Resumes 1949-1990 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 2 Press blurbs 1949-1973 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 3 Correspondence 1980 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 4 Writings 1988 (1 folder, 2 pages)
- b. 1 f. 5 Audition scenes and monologues (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 6 Alexander technique 1993 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 7 American Theatre Wing professional training program 1953-1956 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 8 Equity Library Theatre - clippings (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 9 Theatre Artists Workshop of Westport, Conn. 1988 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 10 Ephemera, notes and letters (1 folder)

Series II: Teaching Papers 1948-1976 (28 folders)

This series contains papers relating to the teaching career of Josephine Nichols. Contracts, correspondence and teaching notes are included. It is divided as follows:

Sub-series 1 - Adelphi College

- Teaching
- Reader's Theatre

Sub-series 2 - Shakespeare Seminars

Sub-series 3 - Temple University

Sub-series 4 - AETA (American Education Theatre Association)/ul>

Sub-series 1 - Adelphi College 1948-1976 (8 folders)

This sub-series contains papers from Josephine Nichols's career at Adelphi College as a teacher and director of their Reader's Theatre. There are contracts, correspondence and evaluations.

Teaching 1948-1976 (4 folders)

These papers are directly related to the adjunct professor position held by Josephine Nichols at Adelphi College.

- b. 1 f. 11 Correspondence 1949-1955 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 12 Personnel evaluation forms 1950-1954 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 13 Poetry Festival invitation 1949 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 14 Ephemera, letters of recommendation 1948-1964 (1 folder)

Reader's Theatre 1956-1966 (4 folders)

These papers are from Josephine Nichols's tenure as director of the Reader's Theatre.

- b. 1 f. 15 Correspondence 1956-1966 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 16 Programs 1953-1964 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 17 Press and touring information (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 18 Ephemera (1 folder)

Sub-series 2 - Shakespeare Seminars 1965-1970 (15 folders)

Series II: Teaching Papers (cont.)

Sub-series 2 - Shakespeare Seminars (cont.)

- b. 1 f. 19 Schedule and notes to class 1965 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 20 Advertisement for teaching (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 21 8-week study group 1965 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 22 Homework for 8-week study group 1965 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 23 Notes on sonnets (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 24 Notes on verse and scansion (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 25 Notes on iambic pentameter (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 26 Notes on basic problems reading Shakespeare (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 27 *Notes on The Tempest* (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 28 Notes on acting Shakespeare (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 29 Notes on pronunciation and imagery (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 30 Notes on rhythm and repetition (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 31 Notes on figures of speech and definition of terms (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 32 Notes on prologues and epilogues (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 33 Clippings 1970 (1 folder)

Sub-series 3 - Temple University 1976 (3 folders)

These papers are related to the class taught at Temple University in 1976 by Josephine Nichols.

- b. 1 f. 34 Correspondence 1976 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 35 Administrative information 1976 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 36 Notes for teaching 1976 (1 folder)

Sub-series 4 - AETA (American Education Theatre Association) 1963-1964 (2 folders)

These papers are from a presentation at the AETA by Josephine Nichols.

- b. 1 f. 37 Correspondence 1963-1964 (1 folder)
- b. 1 f. 38 Programs and research 1964 (1 folder)

Series III: Productions 1958-1990 (2 boxes (86 folders))

This series contains papers, clippings, programs, correspondence and contracts. Occasionally snapshots and ephemera are included. It is divided as follows:

Sub-series 1 - Broadway

Sub-series 2 - Off-Broadway

Sub-series 3 - Film

Sub-series 4 - Television

Sub-series 5 - Stock and Regional Theater

Sub-series 6 - Touring and Miscellaneous Productions

Sub-series 1 - Broadway 1975-1980 (4 folders)

This sub-series includes papers, correspondence, programs and clippings from two productions: *Skin of Our Teeth* (1975) and *Clothes for a Summer Hotel* (1980).

Chronological

Skin of our Teeth 1975 (2 folders)

- b. 2 f. 1 Correspondence and contracts 1975 (1 folder)
- b. 2 f. 2 Clippings and program 1975 (1 folder)

Clothes for a Summer Hotel 1980 (2 folders)

Series III: Productions (cont.)

Sub-series 1 - Broadway (cont.)

Clothes for a Summer Hotel (cont.)

b. 2 f. 3 Correspondence and contracts 1980 (1 folder)

b. 2 f. 4 Clippings and program 1980 (1 folder)

Sub-series 2 - Off-Broadway 1958-1985 (12 folders)

This sub-series includes papers, correspondence, programs and clippings from eight productions: *The Golden Six* (1958), *The Unicorn from the Stars* (1970), *Richard III / Assembly Theatre* (1970), *Holy Ghosts* (1977), *Uncommon Women* (1977-1978), *Filigree People* (1978), *The Grinding Machine* (1978), and *Chaos and Hard Times / Kaleidoscope Theatre* (1985).

Chronological

The Golden Six 1958 (1 folder)

b. 2 f. 5 Program 1958 (1 folder)

The Unicorn from the Stars 1970 (2 folders)

b. 2 f. 6 Correspondence and contracts 1970 (1 folder)

b. 2 f. 7 Clippings, program and sheet music 1970 (1 folder)

Richard III / Assembly Theatre 1970 (1 folder)

b. 2 f. 8 Clippings and program 1970 (1 folder)

Holy Ghosts 1977 (1 folder)

b. 1 f. 9 Clippings and program 1977 (1 folder)

Uncommon Women 1977-1978 (3 folders)

b. 2 f. 10 Correspondence and contracts 1977-1978 (1 folder)

b. 2 f. 11 Clippings and programs 1977-1978 (1 folder)

b. 2 f. 12 Ephemera 1977-1978 (1 folder)

Filigree People 1978 (2 folders)

b. 2 f. 13 Correspondence 1978 (1 folder)

b. 2 f. 14 Program and notes 1978 (1 folder)

The Grinding Machine 1978 (1 folder)

b. 2 f. 15 Program 1978 (1 folder)

Chaos and Hardtimes / Kaleidoscope Theatre 1985 (1 folder)

b. 2 f. 16 Clippings, program and notes 1985 (1 folder)

Sub-series 3 - Film 1978 (1 folder)

This sub-series includes papers from one motion picture: *Hide in Plain Sight* (1978)

Hide in Plain Sight (Motion picture) 1978 (1 folder)

b. 2 f. 17 Correspondence and schedule 1978 (1 folder)

Sub-series 4 - Television 1980-1985 (6 folders)

This sub-series includes papers, clippings, schedules and some ephemera from three productions: *The Elephant Man* (1980), *Texas* (1980-1982), and *Another World* (1985)

Chronological

The Elephant Man (Television program) 1980 (1 folder)

b. 2 f. 18 Correspondence and contracts 1980 (1 folder)

Texas (Television program) 1980-1982 (4 folders)

b. 2 f. 19 Correspondence and contracts 1980-1982 (1 folder)

b. 2 f. 20 Clippings and public relations 1980-1982 (1 folder)

b. 2 f. 21 Production info and contacts 1980-1982 (1 folder)

Series III: Productions (cont.)

Sub-series 4 - Television (cont.)

Texas (Television program) (cont.)

- b. 2 f. 22 Ephemera: pictures and fan mail 1980-1982 (1 folder)
Another World (Television program) 1985 (1 folder)

- b. 2 f. 23 Production information 1985 (1 folder)

Sub-series 5 - Stock and Regional Theater 1971-1988 (2 boxes (52 folders))

This sub-series contains papers, correspondence, contracts, clippings and ephemera from 24 productions in the following theaters: Barter Theatre, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Hartford Stage Company, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (D.C.), McCarter Theatre Company, Meadow Brook, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Missouri Repertory Theatre, Peterborough Players, Players Theatre Columbus, Pioneer Memorial Theatre, Queens Festival Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Spreckels Theatre, Summerstage (CT), Totem Pole Playhouse, and the Virginia Stage Company .

Alphabetical by Theater

Barter Theater 1976 (2 folders)

- b. 2 f. 24 *Democracy - Correspondence and contracts* 1976 (1 folder)

- b. 2 f. 25 *Democracy - Clippings and program* 1976 (1 folder)

Berkshire Theatre Festival 1978 (3 folders)

- b. 2 f. 26 *Dodsworth - Correspondence and contract* 1978 (1 folder)

- b. 2 f. 27 *Dodsworth - Clippings and program* 1978 (1 folder)

- b. 2 f. 28 *Dodsworth - Ephemera* 1978 (1 folder)

Hartford Stage Company 1971 (3 folders)

- b. 2 f. 29 *Blithe Spirit - Correspondence and contract* 1971 (1 folder)

- b. 2 f. 30 *Blithe Spirit - Clippings and program* 1971 (1 folder)

- b. 2 f. 31 *Blithe Spirit - Ephemera* 1971 (1 folder)

John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (D.C.) 1983 (2 folders)

- b. 2 f. 32 *Golden Age - Contract* 1983 (1 folder)

- b. 2 f. 33 *Golden Age - Clippings and notes* 1983 (1 folder)

McCarter Theatre Company 1979 (2 folders)

- b. 2 f. 34 *All the Way Home - Correspondence and contract* 1979 (1 folder)

- b. 2 f. 35 *All the Way Home - Clippings and program* 1979 (1 folder)

Meadow Brook Theatre 1975 (2 folders)

- b. 2 f. 36 *Death of a Salesman - Correspondence and contracts* 1975 (1 folder)

- b. 2 f. 37 *Death of a Salesman - Clippings and program* 1975 (1 folder)

Milwaukee Repertory Theatre 1971-1975 (12 folders)

- b. 2 f. 38 *Cat Among Pidgeons - Correspondence and contract* 1971 (1 folder)

- b. 2 f. 39 *Cat Among Pidgeons - Ephemera* 1971 (1 folder)

- b. 2 f. 40 *The English Mystery Plays - Clippings* 1971 (1 folder)

- b. 2 f. 41 *A Delicate Balance - Correspondence and contract* 1972 (1 folder)

- b. 2 f. 42 *A Delicate Balance - Clippings and program* 1972 (1 folder)

- b. 2 f. 43 *Scenes from American Life - Correspondence* 1972 (1 folder)

- b. 2 f. 44 *Scenes from American Life - Clippings* 1972 (1 folder)

- b. 2 f. 45 *The Cherry Orchard - Correspondence and contract* 1973 (1 folder)

- b. 2 f. 46 *The Cherry Orchard - Clippings and program* 1973 (1 folder)

- b. 2 f. 47 *All Together Now - Clippings and program* 1973 (1 folder)

Series III: Productions (cont.)

Sub-series 5 - Stock and Regional Theater (cont.)

Milwaukee Repertory Theatre (cont.)

b. 2 f. 48 *Democracy - Correspondence and contract* 1975 (1 folder)

b. 2 f. 49 *Democracy - Clippings* 1975 (1 folder)

Missouri Repertory Theatre 1985 (2 folders)

b. 2 f. 50 *Foxfire - Correspondence and contract* 1985 (1 folder)

b. 2 f. 51 *Foxfire - Clippings and program* 1985 (1 folder)

Peterborough Players 1983-1984 (5 folders)

b. 3 f. 1 *Ragged Mountain Elegies - Correspondence and contract* 1983 (1 folder)

b. 3 f. 2 *Ragged Mountain Elegies - Clippings and program* 1983 (1 folder)

b. 3 f. 3 *Ragged Mountain Elegies - Ephemera* 1983 (1 folder)

b. 3 f. 4 *True West - Clippings and program* 1984 (1 folder)

b. 3 f. 5 *True West - Ephemera* 1984 (1 folder)

Players Theatre Columbus 1987 (1 folder)

b. 3 f. 6 *A Murder of Crows - Correspondence and contract* 1987 (1 folder)

Pioneer Memorial Theatre 1984 (3 folders)

b. 3 f. 7 *On Golden Pond - Correspondence* 1984 (1 folder)

b. 3 f. 8 *On Golden Pond - Clippings and program* 1984 (1 folder)

b. 3 f. 9 *On Golden Pond - Ephemera* 1984 (1 folder)

Queens Festival Theatre 1979 (1 folder)

b. 3 f. 10 *Hedda Gabler - Correspondence and contract* 1979 (1 folder)

Seattle Repertory Theatre 1977 (3 folders)

b. 3 f. 11 *The Show-Off - Correspondence and contracts* 1977 (1 folder)

b. 3 f. 12 *The Show-Off - Clippings and program* 1977 (1 folder)

b. 3 f. 13 *The Show-Off - Ephemera* 1977 (1 folder)

Spreckels Theatre 1979 (2 folders)

b. 3 f. 14 *Uncle Vanya - Correspondence and contracts* 1979 (1 folder)

b. 3 f. 15 *Uncle Vanya - Clippings and program* 1979 (1 folder)

Summerstage (CT) 1978 (3 folders)

b. 3 f. 16 *The Importance of Being Earnest - Correspondence* 1978 (1 folder)

b. 3 f. 17 *The Importance of Being Earnest - Clippings and program* 1978 (1 folder)

b. 3 f. 18 *The Importance of Being Earnest - Ephemera* 1978 (1 folder)

Totem Pole Theatre 1971 (3 folders)

b. 3 f. 19 *The Southwest Corner - Correspondence and contract* 1971 (1 folder)

b. 3 f. 20 *The Southwest Corner - Clippings and program* 1971 (1 folder)

b. 3 f. 21 *The Southwest Corner - Ephemera* 1971 (1 folder)

Virginia Stage Company 1988 (3 folders)

b. 3 f. 22 *Les Liaisons Dangereuses - Correspondence and contracts* 1988 (1 folder)

b. 3 f. 23 *Les Liaisons Dangereuses - Clippings and programs* 1988 (1 folder)

b. 23 f. 24 *Les Liaisons Dangereuses - Ephemera* 1988 (1 folder)

Series III: Productions (cont.)

Sub-series 6 - Touring and Miscellaneous Productions 1970-1990 (13 folders)

These papers include touring productions, miscellaneous productions and Josephine's self-produced performances.

Chronological

Sonnets and Scenes from Shakespeare 1970-1976 (5 folders)

- b. 3 f. 25 Correspondence and contracts 1970-1976 (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 26 Clippings and programs 1970-1976 (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 27 Sample drafts for shows 1970-1972 (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 28 Complete draft for show 1970 (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 29 Ephemera and research 1970 (1 folder)

Forty Carats 1977 (2 folders)

- b. 3 f. 30 Correspondence and contract 1971 (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 31 Clippings and program 1971 (1 folder)

1977 Playwrights Conference / Eugene O'Neill Theater Center 1977 (3 folders)

- b. 3 f. 32 Correspondence and contract 1977 (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 33 Programs 1977 (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 34 Ephemera 1977 (1 folder)

1979 Playwrights Conference / Eugene O'Neill Theater Center 1979 (2 folders)

- b. 3 f. 35 Correspondence and contract 1979 (1 folder)
- b. 3 f. 36 Programs 1979 (1 folder)

Sara and Jo at Carter Hall 1990 (1 folder)

- b. 3 f. 37 Notes, scripts, press releases 1990 (1 folder)