

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
THE BILLY ROSE THEATRE COLLECTION

Jean Adair, 1872?-1953.
Papers, 1914-1942 [bulk dates 1914-1929]

*T-Mss 1953-001
slm (5/94)

MAIN ENTRY:	Jean Adair, 1872?-1953.
TITLE:	Papers, 1914-1942 [bulk dates 1914-1929].
SIZE:	1 lf. (1 box).
ACCESS:	Unrestricted.
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:	Actress Jean Adair was born in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada in 1872?. She trained in Chicago, worked extensively in stock and vaudeville and made her Broadway debut in 1922 in <i>It's A Boy</i> . Miss Adair appeared in more than thirty Broadway productions and is best remembered for her portrayal of Martha Brewster in both the stage and film versions of <i>Arsenic and Old Lace</i> . Her last appearance was in <i>The Crucible</i> in 1953. She died that same year in New York City.
DESCRIPTION:	The Jean Adair Papers consist of correspondence, clippings and ephemera. The materials span the years 1914-1942 and are mainly about her career.

INTRODUCTION

The Jean Adair Papers [53M78] were a gift to The Billy Rose Theatre Collection from Mrs. Howard Lindsay [Dorothy Stickney] in 1953. The collection was reprocessed in 1993.

ARRANGEMENT NOTE

The Jean Adair Papers are arranged in two series:
Series I - Correspondence.
Series II - Personal Papers

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Character actress Jean Adair was born Violet McNaughton in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada in 1872?. [For a short time she was also known as Jennet Adair.] She trained for the theater in Chicago and developed her craft in stock companies. Her first important role was the lead in the William A. Brady tour of *Mother*. She spent several seasons on the vaudeville circuit doing one-act playlets including *The Old Aristocrat*, *Beauty Is Only Skin Deep* and *Maggie Taylor, Waitress*. Her Broadway career began in 1922 with *It's A Boy* and, after over 30 productions, ended with *The Crucible* in 1953. No matter how small her role, she always won praise from the critics.

Miss Adair was mainly known for playing mothers but is best remembered for her portrayal of Aunt Martha in both the stage and film versions of *Arsenic and Old Lace*. She died in New York City on May 11, 1953 at the age of 80.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection documents the early part of Jean Adair's career through clippings, correspondence, a few photographs, and ephemera. The material spans the years 1914-1936. Programs and photographs were separated from the collection and integrated into the appropriate Theatre Collection files. [see attached list] Autographed programs remain with her papers.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Series I - Correspondence (1 folder). Includes telegrams, a few letters, a John Cromwell-Kay Johnson wedding invitation [1925-1928].

Series II - Personal Papers (4 folders). Includes reviews and publicity articles about Miss Adair, a few photographs, autographed programs, and ephemera [1914-1942].

***T-Mss 1953-001**

Jean Adair Papers, 1914-1929

Container listing

Series I: Correspondence

Box 1, folder 1 Correspondence "A-Z", 1925-1928

Series II: Personal Papers

Box 1, folder 2	Clippings, 1914-1929 & undated
Box 1, folder 3	Clippings, 1923-1936
Box 1, folder 4	Personal photographs, 1914-1923
Box 1, folder 5	Ephemera / Jean Adair
Box 1, folder 6	Autographed programs / Jean Adair

PHOTOGRAPHS SEPARATED AND ADDED TO THE THEATRE COLLECTION A,
B AND C PHOTO FILES

Ah, Wilderness! - 1 Vandamm
Arsenic and Old Lace (Motion picture) - 1B
Beauty is Only Skin Deep - 1B
Black Sheep - 1C
Ella Comes to Town - 3C
End of Summer - 2A
Maggie Taylor, Waitress - 2B, 2C
Sun Kissed - 1C
Jean Adair - 1A, 5B, 10C
Margaret Hoffman - 1B
William A. Brady Stock Company - 1B

AUTOGRAPHED PHOTOGRAPHS

Arsenic and Old Lace (Motion picture) - signed by most of the cast
Rosita (of Rosita and Ramon)

PROGRAMS SEPARATED AND ADDED TO THE THEATRE COLLECTION
PROGRAM FILES

Arsenic and Old Lace
Broomsticks, Amen!
Best Years
Blessed Event
Come Easy
Devils
Fashion
For Services Rendered
The Good Fellow
Goodbye in the Night
It's A Boy
The Jay Walker
Little Women
Let Us Be Gay
Murder at the Vanities
Machinal
Mid-West
On Borrowed Time
Paris
The Silver Tassie
Scarlet Pages
The Show-Off
Sinners
Star Spangled Family
Tobacco Road
That Ferguson Family
Various vaudeville programs including: *The Old Aristocrat*, *Beauty is Only Skin Deep*,
The Cake Eaters