

Atiyeh, Wadeha, 1903-1973.
Papers, 1931-1972.
1 box, incl. 3 vol.

Wadeeha Atiyeh, a Lebanese singer, dancer, actress, writer, and storyteller came to the United States as a young child. She was raised by her grandparents who maintained the Middle Eastern traditions, although they lived in Chicago.

With the encouragement of a grammar school teacher who recognized her talent, Wadeeha Atiyeh began to take singing lessons, and later studied voice under the direction of Ruth Julia Hall. She made her professional singing debut in Chicago, Oct. 30, 1932. Wadeeha Atiyeh continued giving performances throughout the midwest, adding traditional dances and story-telling to her programs. Soon she was writing her own scripts, adapting traditional lyrics and music to suit her routine, and designing her own costumes. Eventually she moved to New York City where she continued performing and writing.

Wadeeha Atiyeh wrote many short stories which were autobiographical in nature, and also rewrote in English several traditional Middle Eastern tales. In addition, she compiled a Middle Eastern cookbook, Scheherezad Cooks!, which contained stories and interesting facts about Middle Eastern life, as well as recipes adapted for use in modern kitchens with ingredients available in American supermarkets.

The Wadeeha Atiyeh papers, 1931-1972, contain programs, reviews, publicity and public relations announcements, scripts and music from her productions, writings, correspondence, miscellaneous items, and published works. They have been divided according to format and arranged chronologically within each.

Photographs of Wadeeha Atiyeh are available in the photographic collection. Several of her theatrical costumes are in the museum collection.

Gift of Mary McDermott, 1974.

Container 1: Papers, 1931-1972.

- folder 1: Programs, reviews, and publicity, 1931-1972, n.d.
- folder 2: Scrapbook of reviews and programs, 1931-1933.
- folder 3: Writings, n.d., including autobiographical stories and ms. copy of The Fourth Wiseman.
- folder 4: Scripts, n.d.
- folder 5: Lyrics and translations, n.d.
- folder 6: Music mss.
- folder 7: Music mss.
- folder 8: Music mss. and printed sheet music used in Atiyeh's performances.
- folder 9: Ms. draft of cookbook, ca. 1960.
- folder 10: Reviews and advertisements for Scheherezad Cooks!, 1960-1961.
- folder 11: Correspondence, 1945-1964, n.d., and miscellaneous items, 1936-1961.
- folder 12: Published works of Atiyeh, The Fourth Wiseman, Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, and Scheherezad Cooks! (3 bound volumes).
- folder 13: Artwork, 1932-1961