



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Letters from John Van Druten

1929-1931

*T-Mss 2001-035

Summary

Creator: Houston, D. Franklin

Title: Letters from John Van Druten

Date: 1929-1931

Size: .21 linear feet. (1 box of material)

Abstract: John Van Druten (1901-1957) was an Anglo-American playwright, theatrical director, screenwriter, and novelist. Born in London of a Dutch father and an English mother, Van Druten was educated at London's University College School. His controversial play *YOUNG WOODLEY* (1928), initially prohibited, was eventually staged successfully in London and New York. Van Druten's later plays include *THERE'S ALWAYS JULIET* (1931), *OLD ACQUAINTANCE* (1940), the hugely successful *VOICE OF THE TURTLE* (1943), and *BELL, BOOK, AND CANDLE* (1950). Van Druten adapted several of these plays into film versions, and also wrote original screenplays, including *UNFAITHFUL* (1931) for Ruth Chatterton. Van Druten adapted Christopher Isherwood's *BERLIN STORIES* into the play *I AM A CAMERA*, which was made into a movie and later musicalized on stage and screen as *CABARET*. Van Druten's novels include *A WOMAN ON HER WAY* (1931) and *THE VICARIOUS YEARS* (1956). John Van Druten died on Dec. 19, 1957, at the age of 56. John Van Druten's letters to his friend D. Franklin Houston were written between Feb. 1929 to March 1931, from London, various places in France, and later from Hollywood, where Van Druten was writing a screenplay. Van Druten writes about his novel in progress, *ELINOR*, later to be retitled *A WOMAN ON HER WAY*, expresses his opinions about current plays in London, writes heartfelt but obscure notes about love affairs gone awry, and expresses disdain for the Hollywood movie industry. Also included is a very brief note to Houston from Noel Coward.

Preferred citation: Letters from John Van Druten, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library

Creator History

John Van Druten (1901-1957) was an Anglo-American playwright, theatrical director, screenwriter, and novelist. Born in London of a Dutch father and an English mother, Van Druten was educated at London's University College School. His controversial play *YOUNG WOODLEY* (1928), initially prohibited, was eventually staged successfully in London and New York. Van Druten's later plays include *THERE'S ALWAYS JULIET* (1931), *OLD ACQUAINTANCE* (1940), the hugely successful

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Scope and Content Note

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Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Correspondence

Subjects

Motion picture industry -- California -- Los Angeles
Theater -- England -- London

Names

Houston, D. Franklin
Coward, Noel, 1899-1973
Van Druten, John, 1901-1957