



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Helen Hayes correspondence with Anita Loos

1946-1993 and undated

*T-Mss 2005-016

Summary

Creator: Hayes, Helen, 1900-1993

Title: Helen Hayes correspondence with Anita Loos

Date: 1946-1993 and undated

Size: .25 linear feet (1 box)

Source: Papers: Gift/Purchase, A. Lovell Elliott, 11/27/2005

Abstract: Letters, cards and postcards by Hayes to Loos are intimate and detailed, providing a rich depiction of Hayes' work, theatrical touring and personal life. Most of the material is undated. Also includes a few letters and telegrams from Loos to Hayes, a few items of correspondence with third parties, a few clippings and a snapshot of Hayes from 1978.

Preferred citation: Helen Hayes correspondence with Anita Loos, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library

Creator History

Helen Hayes (1900-1993), leading American actress, known as the "First Lady of American Theater," made her stage debut in 1905 and by the 1920s was a fixture on the Broadway stage, appearing over the years in such classics as *SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER*, *MARY OF SCOTLAND*, *THE FRONT PAGE*, and *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*, and as Queen Victoria in *VICTORIA REGINA*, perhaps her best-known role.

Anita Loos, American author and screenwriter, wrote over 150 screenplays beginning in the silent era, but is perhaps best known for her 1925 novel, *GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES*, which she adapted for both the stage and screen. Her witty touch helped propel the careers of Douglas Fairbanks, Mae West, Carol Channing and Marilyn Monroe. In the 1940s, Loos was asked by her friend, actress Helen Hayes, to write a script that would help Hayes break out of a string of overly serious roles. Loos wrote *HAPPY BIRTHDAY*, starring a librarian in a bar. The play premiered on Broadway at the Broadhurst Theater on Halloween 1946 and ran for 564 performances. Later, Loos collaborated with Hayes on a book about New York City, *TWICE OVER LIGHTLY: NEW YORK THEN AND NOW* (1972).

Scope and Content Note

Letters, cards and postcards by Hayes to Loos are intimate and detailed, providing a rich depiction of Hayes' work, theatrical touring and personal life. Most of the material is undated. Also includes a few letters and telegrams from Loos to Hayes, a few items of correspondence with third parties, a few clippings and a snapshot of Hayes from 1978.

Key Terms

Occupations

Actors

Subjects

Theater -- United States

Names

Hayes, Helen, 1900-1993

Loos, Anita, 1893-1981