



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Squire Bancroft letter book

1836-1922

*T-Mss 2000-025

Summary

Creator: Bancroft, Squire, 1841-1926

Title: Squire Bancroft letter book

Date: 1836-1922

Size: 1.5 linear feet. (1 letter book)

Abstract: Squire Bancroft (1841-1926), English actor-manager, played hundreds of roles in a theatrical career which spanned over fifty years, and brought him into contact with most of the leading English theatrical figures of his day. Born May 14, 1861, of well-to-do means, Squire Bancroft was educated privately in England and France. He made his stage debut in 1861 at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, toured the provinces, then made his London debut in 1865 at the Prince of Wales Theatre as Jack Crawley in *A WINNING HAZARD*, under the management of H. J. Byron and prominent actress Marie Wilton (1839-1921). He married Miss Wilton in 1867, and joined her in theatrical management. Over the next eighteen years, in addition to his management duties, Squire Bancroft played many leading roles in contemporary plays as well as works by Shakespeare and Sheridan. He retired from management in 1885, but continued acting until 1918; he also wrote three books, one in collaboration with his wife. Sir Squire Bancroft died on April 19, 1926, at the age of 84. Squire Bancroft's letter book consists of autograph documents (notes and brief letters) and clipped autographs, written by prominent 19th century theatrical figures, including William C. Macready, Charlotte Cushman, Lester Wallack, Junius Brutus Booth, Tommaso Salvini, Laura Keane, Sir Henry Irving, Ellen Terry, and others. Some notes are addressed to Marie Bancroft.

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>

Preferred citation: Squire Bancroft letter book, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library

Creator History

Squire Bancroft (1841-1926), English actor-manager, played hundreds of roles in a theatrical career which spanned over fifty years, and brought him into contact with most of the leading English theatrical figures of his day. Born May 14, 1861, of well-to-do means, Squire Bancroft was educated privately in England and France. He made his stage debut in 1861 at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, toured the provinces, then made his London debut in 1865 at the Prince of Wales Theatre as Jack Crawley in *A WINNING HAZARD*, under the management of H. J. Byron and prominent actress Marie Wilton (1839-1921). He married Miss Wilton in 1867, and joined her in theatrical management. Over the next eighteen years, in addition to his management duties, Squire Bancroft played many leading roles in contemporary plays as well as works by Shakespeare and Sheridan. He retired from management in 1885, but continued acting until 1918; he also wrote three books, one in collaboration with his wife. Sir Squire Bancroft died on April 19, 1926, at the age of 84.

Scope and Content Note

Squire Bancroft's letter book consists of autograph documents (notes and brief letters) and clipped autographs, written by prominent 19th century theatrical figures, including William C. Macready, Charlotte Cushman, Lester Wallack, Junius Brutus Booth, Tommaso Salvini, Laura Keane, Sir Henry Irving, Ellen Terry, and others. Some notes are addressed to Marie Bancroft.

Key Terms

Subjects

Actors -- England
Actresses -- England
Theater -- History -- 19th century

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Appointment books
Letter books

Names

Bancroft, Squire, 1841-1926
Bancroft, Marie, 1839-1921
Irving, Henry, Sir, 1838-1905
Terry, Ellen, Dame, 1847-1928
Wallack, Lester, 1820-1888