



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Letters to E. Lawrence Dudley

1917-1927

*T-Mss 1975-005

Summary

Creator: Arliss, George, 1868-1946

Title: Letters to E. Lawrence Dudley

Date: 1917-1927

Size: 25 letters (1 portfolio)

Abstract: George Arliss (1868-1946), English stage and screen actor, was best known for portraying historical figures such as British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, Alexander Hamilton, Cardinal Richelieu, and French author Voltaire. Following Arliss' success with the stage version of Louis Napoleon Parker's DISRAELI (1911), authors E. Lawrence Dudley and George Gibbs attempted to fashion a similar vehicle based on the life of Voltaire, but the project ran into difficulties, eventually causing a rift between the collaborators, and the play was never staged. More than a decade later, after Arliss won a Best Actor Oscar for the film version of DISRAELI (1929), Dudley and Gibbs contributed to the screenplay of the Warner Brothers' film version of VOLTAIRE (1933). Consists of 23 handwritten letters from George Arliss to E. Lawrence Dudley, 1 note from Arliss to George Gibbs, and 1 undated Christmas card from Mr. and Mrs. Arliss. Arliss' unhappiness with Dudley and Gibbs' work on their script for the play VOLTAIRE becomes clear in the course of the correspondence, and the primary reasons for his eventual break with his collaborators is laid out in a long and heated letter of Oct. 22, 1920.

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>

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Creator History

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French author Voltaire. Following Arliss' success with the stage version of Louis Napoleon Parker's DISRAELI (1911), authors E. Lawrence Dudley and George Gibbs attempted to fashion a similar vehicle based on the life of Voltaire, but the project ran into difficulties, eventually causing a rift between the collaborators, and the play was never staged. More than a decade later, after Arliss won a Best Actor Oscar for the film version of DISRAELI (1929), Dudley and Gibbs contributed to the screenplay of the Warner Brothers' film version of VOLTAIRE (1933).

Scope and Content Note

Consists of 23 handwritten letters from George Arliss to E. Lawrence Dudley, 1 note from Arliss to George Gibbs, and 1 undated Christmas card from Mr. and Mrs. Arliss. Arliss' unhappiness with Dudley and Gibbs' work on their script for the play VOLTAIRE becomes clear in the course of the correspondence, and the primary reasons for his eventual break with his collaborators is laid out in a long and heated letter of Oct. 22, 1920.

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Correspondence

Subjects

Theater -- New York (State) -- New York

Names

Arliss, George, 1868-1946

Dudley, E. Lawrence (Edward Lawrence), 1879-

Gibbs, George, 1870-1942