

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY  
RARE BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS DIVISION  
ACCESSION SHEET

75 M 62;

Accession #77 M 21; 80 M 22

Location 27-J/K-1

Title Langdon Mitchell Papers

Approximate inclusive dates 1883 - 1936

Date of receipt Sept. 1975; 1977; 1980

Received from Eleanor F. Johnson;  
David Price via  
Theater Division

Volume on arrival Unknown

Number of boxes (after reboxing) 5 RC, 1 ½ AB; 5 ¼ LF

Condition Fair; some highly acidic paper becoming brittle; many rusty paper clips

Restrictions None

Description See attached sheets

Special Formats  Photographs  Maps  Audio Tapes  Films  Graphics  
 Artifacts  Machine-readable records  
 Other (list) \_\_\_\_\_

Temporary catalog card added entries

See attached sheets

Accessioned by LB

Date Oct. 14, 1987

LANGDON E. MITCHELL PAPERS

Poet and playwright Langdon Elwyn Mitchell (1862 - 1935) was born in Philadelphia. Son of neurologist and author Silas Weir Mitchell, Langdon studied at the St. Paul's School in New Hampshire, in Dresden and in Paris. Mitchell later took courses at Harvard and Columbia Law Schools, and was admitted to the New York Bar in 1886. However, he never practiced law but instead turned to the writing of poems and plays. In 1892, he married Marian Lea. Also from Philadelphia, Lea was appearing on the London stage at the time, but retired soon after. The couple had two daughters and a son.

Early in his career, Mitchell used the pen name "John Philip Varley." Among his books are Sylvian And Other Poems (1884), Poems (1894), Love In The Backwoods (1896), and Understanding America (1927). However, it was as a playwright that Mitchell gained his greatest success. His first play, In the Season, was produced at the St. James Theater in London in 1893. Becky Sharp a dramatization of Vanity Fair, followed in 1899. His greatest success, The New York Idea, dealing with the subject of divorce, was produced for the first time in 1906.

Mitchell was elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters in February 1908. In 1928, along with four other prominent playwrights, Mitchell gave a series of lectures at the University of Pennsylvania which were published by the University Press that year under the title The Art Of Playwriting. He then accepted an invitation to become Professor of Playwriting in the University's English Department, a position established by a gift from the Mask and Wig Club, a University dramatic group. He retired in 1930.

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The papers consist primarily of manuscripts and typescripts of poems written by Mitchell from 1884 to 1915. The material is in rough chronological order. A group of poems written earlier and put in typed form in 1935 have been removed from binders. A portion of this typed material comprises copies of poems arranged alphabetically by first word.

Also in the collection are many manuscript notes reflecting Mitchell's ideas for his writings.

The collection also contains a very small amount of personal correspondence covering the period from 1888 to 1933. Among the correspondents are: his long-time friend Owen Wister, Herman Keyserling, Paul J. Patrick, Talcott Williams, and one incoming letter from Theodore Roosevelt dated 1916.

LANGDON MITCHELL PAPERS

BOX LISTING

BOX

CONTENTS

1

Poems, typed

1883 - 1912

2

1904 - 1910

1884 - 1915, typed in 1935

3

Poems, hand written

1883 - 1915

4

1902 - 1915

1926 - 1930

Not dated

5

Poems, originals and typed copies

1884 - 1936

Story ideas and notes

6

Correspondence, 1888 - 1933

TEMPORARY CATALOG CARD ADDED ENTRIES

Poets, American - 19th century

Poets, American - 20th century

Dramatists, American - 19th century

Dramatists, American - 20th century

Poetry, Modern - American -- 19th century

Poetry, Modern - American -- 20th century

Owen Wistar

Theodore Roosevelt