



# The New York Public Library Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

## **Adelaide Neilson papers**

1870-1911

\*T-Mss 1993-003

Processed by Susan McArthur and Mary Ellen Rogan.

### **Summary**

**Creator:** Neilson, Adelaide, 1848-1880

**Title:** Adelaide Neilson papers

**Date:** 1870-1911

**Source:** Purchase, Charles Apfelbaum, 02/03/1993

**Abstract:** The Adelaide Neilson Papers consist primarily of correspondence to her mother Anne Bland. Other papers include legal documents, personal items and clippings. The bulk of the materials document her life between 1870 and 1880, the rest of the collection concern her brother's legal dealings over the disposition of her mother's estate.

### **Conditions Governing Access:**

Photocopying prohibited.

**Conditions Governing Use:** For permission to publish contact the Curator, Billy Rose Theatre Division.

**Preferred citation:** [Identification of item], Adelaide Neilson papers, \*T Mss 1993-003, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

**Processing note:** Processed by Susan McArthur and Mary Ellen Rogan.

### **Creator History**

Adelaide Neilson, one of the most popular and successful nineteenth century actresses, was born in 1848 in or near Leeds, Yorkshire, England. She was born out of wedlock and never knew her father. Her mother married a Mr. Bland and the family settled in Guiseley. The young Lizzie Ann (Miss Neilson's real name) worked in a mill and then as a nurse girl. She was about seventeen when she made her way to London where she subsequently began her acting career. Her first appearance was in 1865 at the Margate Theatre. From 1870 until her death in 1880 "she was a reigning actress of the English stage" and was popular in America as well. She is best remembered for her portrayal of Juliet.



Her marriage to Philip Henry Lee in 1864 ended in divorce. She died quite suddenly in 1880.

## **Custodial History**

The Adelaide Neilson Papers were purchased by The Billy Rose Theatre Division from Charles Apfelbaum, rare book dealer, and accessioned February 3, 1993.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The Adelaide Neilson Papers consist of personal and legal correspondence and personal ephemera. Most of the letters are from Miss Neilson to her mother. These span the years 1870-1879. The legal correspondence, dated 1911, concern her brother's claim to her mother's estate. Among the ephemera are copies of her will and a lock of her hair.

**Arrangement:** The Adelaide Neilson papers are arranged in two series. They are: I. Correspondence  
II. Ephemera

## **Key Terms**

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Clippings  
Correspondence  
Photoprints

### **Subjects**

Theater -- England -- 19th century

### **Names**

Neilson, Adelaide, 1848-1880  
Bland, Anne  
Bland, Charles R



## Container List

### Series I - Correspondence 1870-1879

This series consists of letters from Miss Neilson to her mother Anne Bland. It also contains letters from her mother-in-law and William Carr Glynn. The legal correspondence [1911] concerns her brother Charles' claim to her estate.

Arranged alphabetically.

- b. 1 f. 1 Correspondence / Charles R. Bland 1911 (1 letter)
- b. 1 f. 2 Correspondence / William Carr Glynn 1880 (1 letter, 2 pages)
- b. 1 f. 3 Correspondence / Mrs Lee (1 letter)
- b. 1 f. 4 Legal correspondence / Adelaide Neilson 1911 (3 pages)
- b. 1 f. 5 Correspondence / Adelaide Neilson (5 letters, 8 items)
- b. 1 f. 6 Correspondence / Adelaide Neilson 1870 (6 letters, 1 telegram; 12 items)
- b. 1 f. 7 Correspondence / Adelaide Neilson 1876 (7 letters; 15 items.)
- b. 1 f. 8 Correspondence, 1878 / Adelaide Neilson 1878 (4 letters; 10 items)

### Series II - Ephemera

This series consists of personal ephemera including a lock of Miss Neilson's hair, copies of her will and her mother's death certificate. Some clippings, photographs and biographical materials complete this series.

Arranged by form.

- b. 1 f. 9 Biographical materials / Adelaide Neilson.  
Biographical notes on the life and career of Adelaide Neilson taken from *The Dictionary of National Biography* and *The Life and Reminiscences of E. L. Blanchard*.
- b. 1 f. 10 Lock of hair / Adelaide Neilson 1856
- b. 1 f. 11 Last will and testament / Adelaide Neilson 1880
- b. 1 f. 12 Death certificate / Anne Bland 1911
- b. 1 f. 13 Clippings and obituaries / Adelaide Neilson 1880
- b. 1 f. 14 Photographs / Adelaide Neilson