



The New York Public Library Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Lillie Langtry biographical materials

undated

*T-Mss 2002-024

Summary

Creator: Wotherspoon, G. (George)

Title: Lillie Langtry biographical materials

Date: undated

Size: (1 portfolio)

Abstract: Consists of an undated 52-page typescript by George Wotherspoon, which appears to have been written in the late 1940s. Entitled "A Lady of Many Amours," Wotherspoon's manuscript is focused primarily on actress Lillie Langtry and her extramarital relationship with a wealthy American sportsman named Frederick Gebhard. Wotherspoon also writes of Langtry's stage career, her reputed relationship with Edward, Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, and about the societal mores of the era. Wotherspoon also writes of Langtry's daughter Jeanne. The typescript is labelled "Part 7," which suggests that this text was part of a larger work which does not survive. Included is a pamphlet of biographical information about Lillie Langtry, written by H. T. Porter and issued by the Société Jersiaise in 1973. Also included are three photographs of Lillie Langtry, one of her father, and one of her grave.

Preferred citation: Lillie Langtry biographical materials, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library

Creator History

Lillie Langtry (1853-1929), nicknamed the "Jersey Lily" after her birthplace of Jersey, England, was an actress and renowned beauty who earned a fortune from her theatrical career. Born Emilie Charlotte Le Breton on October 13, 1853, Lillie Langtry did not begin her stage career until she was almost 30 years old. In 1874 she had married Edward Langtry, a wealthy young Irish widower, but when his fortune slipped away she was persuaded to try acting. After success in London as Kate Hardcastle in *SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER*, Langtry went to New York and made her debut in *AN UNEQUAL MATCH* at Wallack's Theatre on Nov. 6, 1882. She toured the United States almost continuously for the next five years and earned a fortune. She became an American citizen, and divorced Edward Langtry. Stage appearances were less frequent after the 1880s, but Lillie Langtry continued to perform in plays and vaudeville as late as 1915. In 1899 Langtry married Hugo de Bathe, who became a baronet upon the death of his father in 1907, making her Lady de Bathe. She spent much of her retirement in Monaco, where she died on Feb. 12, 1929, at the age of 75.

George Wotherspoon, who met Lillie Langtry in 1882, apparently wrote this biographical piece about her in the late 1940s. Marginal notes, and a few additional comments, have been written in the manuscript by H. T. Porter, who wrote a biographical pamphlet about Lillie Langtry for the Société Jersiaise in 1973.

Scope and Content Note

Consists of an undated 52-page typescript by George Wotherspoon, which appears to have been written in the late 1940s. Entitled "A Lady of Many Amours," Wotherspoon's manuscript is focused primarily on actress Lillie Langtry and her extramarital relationship with a wealthy American sportsman named Frederick Gebhard. Wotherspoon also writes of Langtry's stage career, her reputed relationship with Edward, Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, and about the societal mores of the era. Wotherspoon also writes of Langtry's daughter Jeanne. The typescript is labelled "Part 7," which suggests that this text was part of a larger work which does not survive. Included is a pamphlet of biographical information about Lillie Langtry, written by H. T. Porter and issued by the Société Jersiaise in 1973. Also included are three photographs of Lillie Langtry, one of her father, and one of her grave.

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Photographs
Typescripts

Subjects

Theater -- England
Theater -- United States

Names

Wotherspoon, G. (George)
Langtry, Lillie, 1853-1929
Porter, H. T., biographer